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**Appraisal in discussion sections of doctoral theses
in the discipline of ELT/Applied Linguistics at
Warwick University:
A corpus-based analysis**

By

Yifan Geng

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Declaration

I, Yifan Geng, declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree at another university.

Abstract

The present research, drawing upon Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory, investigated the deployment of interpersonal meanings in discussion sections of doctoral theses produced by both First Language (hereafter L1) Chinese and L1 English speakers from the Centre of Applied Linguistics (hereafter CAL) at the University of Warwick. This study adopted a corpus-based approach to examining the choices of Appraisal options made by L1 Chinese and L1 English writers. It also explored the patterns of discussing the authors' own research findings in relation to previous literature by means of Appraisal options or co-articulations of options, which is considered as a key aspect of the rhetorical purpose of discussion sections.

The statistical tests of this study showed that no significant difference was found in the use of Appraisal options between the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpora. This finding indicates a similar command of these interpersonal resources by both sets of writers and suggests that L1 may not be a constraint for English as second language (hereafter L2) writers on using interpersonal resources at the doctoral level. The qualitative analysis identified different preferences for co-articulating with the three main Appraisal options that the authors adopted to engage with the literature while discussing their findings. It also identified the congruent and non-congruent linguistic realizations of the two main Appraisal options that the authors used to present their claims about findings. Part of the qualitative results was shared with Masters students at CAL for the purpose of raising their awareness of the use of interpersonal language through exploration of extracts from corpus data.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter provides background information about this research. It explains my motivation for the study (1.1), which arises from my learning/tutoring experience. It continues with a brief introduction to the theoretical background of this research (1.2), highlighting the importance of interpersonal meaning in written text and specifically academic text. It then describes the context of the data used in this study, and also begins to theorize the view of context, discussing some of the contextual factors which can particularly influence language use (1.3). Next, it presents my research questions (1.4) as well as a brief explanation of the corpus-based approach adopted in the study (1.5). At the end, it provides the organization of the thesis (1.6).

1.1 Research motivation

The motivation for my study originally stems from my personal experience in learning academic writing during my Masters study at Central Michigan University (CMU), and my experience as a Writing Consultant at the Writing Center, CMU. The “Writing Center Practicum,” which is a preparatory course for new writing consultants, introduced me to a diverse set of academic written genres. Some of these genres such as critical bibliographies were not covered while I studied at college in China. Some such as reflective journals seemed to have different requirements from the corresponding genre in a Chinese university

context. For example, the writing of reflective journals in China seemed to me to be quite procedural, rather than reflective. Some genres such as research papers seemed more prevalent at CMU than in China, which suggested to me that Chinese students have little opportunity to practice.

My experience at the Writing Center not only enabled me to learn different academic discourses but also enabled me to recognize the important role that writing plays in American education. I also recognized that what I had learned about writing in China had not necessarily prepared me for the different context of graduate work in the United States. My awareness of the importance of academic writing and differences across genres and/or institutional contexts inspired me to increase my skills in writing and to learn ways of teaching written language.

While I am interested in all genres and aspects of academic writing, I developed particular interest in research writing such as dissertations/theses due to the difficulties I experienced in producing it and in tutoring other student writers. It seemed that the student writers who attended the Writing Center, many of whom were L2 English writers, were not quite clear of the content, structure, and reader expectation of dissertations/theses. This situation has been reflected in previous literature, for example Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) and Shaw (1991). What seemed to be most challenging for these writers was to take a critical perspective in reviewing relevant literature or in arguing their propositions in relation to

literature. Noticing these difficulties, I became more motivated to explore this aspect of academic writing. I discovered that it had generated a great deal of contemporary research, including work from the new and still developing perspective of Appraisal theory. I therefore developed two broad research aims: to better understand the linguistic resources available for writer positioning and evaluation in academic genres, and to help student writers write in an evaluative way.

My motivation for focusing on theses in the subject area of English Language Teaching (hereafter ELT/Applied Linguistics) originally arose from the importance of English and this field in China today. Bolton and Graddol (2012) mentioned that at present the number of English learners in China is roughly 400 million and that of overseas Chinese students in 2011 was about 230,000 and was estimated to reach around 600,000, according to the *China Daily* newspaper. This large number of English learners resulted in a growing demand for qualified English teachers in both China's public schools and privately-run language learning centers (Bolton & Graddol, 2012).

ELT hence has become a rapidly developing field in China with respect to the increasing learning demand and the more important role that English as a lingua franca plays in worldwide business and education with the globalization of economy. Therefore, more ELT professionals in China seek to pursue higher level

degrees by studying in a master's or doctoral program both in their own countries and in English-speaking countries. The official EU figures as cited in Bolton and Graddol (2012) showed that "the total number of Chinese students in the EU in 2010 was approximately 120,000, an increase of six times the figure for 2000. Those countries reporting the highest numbers of Chinese students were the UK (40% of the total for Europe)..." (p. 6).

Meanwhile, China is endeavoring to develop joint ELT programs with universities abroad among which include the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies - University of Leeds (2003)¹ and Jiangxi Normal University - University of Canberra joint program in MA TESOL (2008)², respectively. China's continuing growth in economy and in willingness to become open to the world is indicative of an increasing number of Chinese students and professionals studying abroad in various disciplines including ELT. Additionally, many universities in China are launching a number of programs teaching through the medium of English in order to attract foreign students and become more internationalized (Bolton & Graddol, 2012). Those universities reported in Bolton and Graddol (2012) include "Fudan University in Shanghai, Nanjing Medical University,

¹ Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, retrieved from <http://www3.gdufs.edu.cn/felc/html/20101208121340702.html> on 25 June 2012

² Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, retrieved from <http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s4726/201011/111707.html> on 25 June 2012

Nantong University, Sichuan University, Soochow University and Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou” (p. 6).

In sum, an analysis of interpersonal meaning in thesis writing in this discipline can help teachers and students better understand the expectations of this genre in the English-speaking academic community and may therefore help students produce successful theses, the most essential piece of writing at the graduate level of education. From a specific pedagogical perspective, it is hoped that the corpus-based findings about the use of interpersonal language can potentially be of direct help to Chinese and possibly other students studying the subject areas of ELT/Applied Linguistics or perhaps other similar areas in the UK or other English medium contexts.

1.2 Theoretical background

1.2.1 Language use from SFL perspective

Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL) considers that language is used to accomplish things such as people’s social activities (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). What is achieved through language use, or technically speaking the function of language, is types of meaning created by choices of language. More importantly, these meanings are sensitive to the context under which language is produced, and simultaneously the language being used is part of the context, being referred to as the co-text. This intrinsic relationship between

language and context is a key research interest in systemic linguistics (Martin, 2010).

According to Matthiessen (2005), context has been developed into three levels of stratification including “ideology, genre, and register” with a decreasing degree of abstraction (p. 514), which can be diagrammatically presented in Figure 1.1.

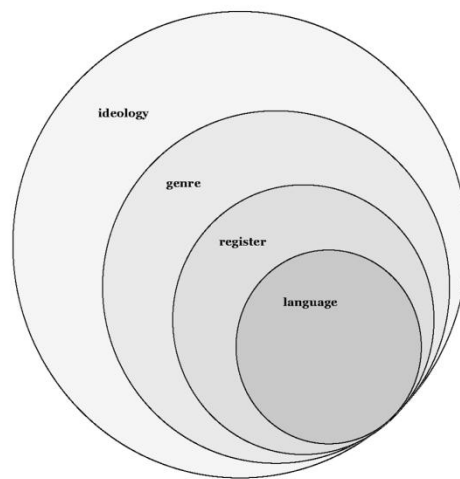


Figure 1.1 *The Stratified Model of Context from Matthiessen (2005:515)*

SFL argues that language is a meaning making system which functions within a culture and a frame of cultural appropriacy (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Linguistic behavior is not arbitrary but is purposeful in order to achieve culturally acceptable goals. The social activity accomplished by language for a particular purpose in a staged way is defined as genre (Martin, 2010). The steps through which language goes to achieve interactional purpose is labeled as “schematic structure” of a genre, and language choices for encoding meanings of

each constituent of the structure is labeled as “realizational patterns” (Eggins, 1994, p. 36). Each constituent of the structure creates a different meaning and thus fulfills a different function relative to the realization of its overall purpose. The schematic structure enables people with shared knowledge of culturally recognized social purposes to identify different types of genre, which in turn are realized by patterns of linguistic choices in certain order. That is to say, language as the realization of genre is used in different ways in terms of different social purposes that people intend to achieve, and is used in different ways in terms of different functions of each stage in a genre. As Eggins (1994) summarized, “realization patterns will differ across genres,” and “realization patterns will differ across schematic stages” (p. 42, original emphasis).

The more concrete level of context is the context of “a situation type” or “register,” referring to the immediate situation under which language is produced (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 27). Register is constituted by three variables: field, mode, and tenor (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Martin, 2010; Matthiessen, 2005). Field concerns the subject matter created by language at a given time, or simply speaking about what is going on. The change of Field typically will vary the use of content words describing the topic along a cline from technical to commonsense use (Eggins, 1994; Martin, 2010). Mode differentiates among other things the possibility of feedback received (e.g.

immediate feedback in face-to-face conversation and lack of such feedback in written discourse) and the role of language playing in a given situation of interactive and non-interactive as two extremes (“language in action” or “language as reflection,” Martin, 2010, p. 22). Change of Mode usually leads to change of language use mainly in lexical complexity and density (Eggins, 1994; Martin, 2010).

Tenor concerns the interpersonal relationship between interactants, or simply speaking who is talking with whom. The general notion of relationship functions in three dimensions of “status, formality and politeness,” a combination of which can vary the “**social distance** between the speaker and the addressee” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 631, original emphasis). Status has to do with power relations; and formality and politeness has to do with the affinity and alignment between the speaker and the interlocutor (Martin, 2010). Change of Tenor will place direct impact on language use particularly in the aspect of the Mood structure of clause (e.g. imperative/interrogative clauses) (Eggins, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The three register variables of Field, Mode, and Tenor are regarded as three significant contextual variables that impact on language use in that they respectively relate to ideational meanings, textual meanings, and interpersonal meanings that language construes simultaneously (Halliday & Matthiessen,

2004; Martin, 2010; Matthiessen, 2005). Descriptions of the register variable of Tenor and the lexico-grammatical resources of English language used to realize it and construe interpersonal meanings have been further developed by Martin and White (2005) in Appraisal theory, on which the present study is grounded.

The impact of register and genre on language use as elucidated above directs the present study to select doctoral theses written for similar subject matter and in the same institution for inclusion in the research corpus. The selection of data from one institution makes it more likely that all texts are of the same culturally recognized purpose and schematic structure through which the purpose is achieved. The selection of theses of similar topic ensures that all texts are of same register variable of Field (similar subject matter), of Mode (written discourse) and of Tenor (student to examiner/novice to expert readership), all of which will shape language use in my data in similar way. A detailed explanation of the doctoral thesis as genre and its three register variables are presented in 2.6.

In addition to register and genre, the highest stratum of context of ideology impacts on language use in whatever cultural and situational context. Eggins (1994) argued that “to use language at all is to use it to encode particular positions, beliefs, biases, etc.” (p. 11). In this sense, no text can be viewed as neutral and objective representation of the external reality but is the construction of it encoded with the speaker/writer’s views and perspectives. The implication for the present

study is that the construction of doctoral theses will inevitably be impacted on by writers' ideological thoughts as realized in the patterns of lexico-grammar.

Ideology is inherently contestable, and so the successful production of theses lies in the deployment of meaning-making patterns in a way that authorial positions will be accepted or appreciated by the reader, and so will the overall communicative purpose be achieved.

1.2.2 Appraisal theory

As briefly mentioned above, Appraisal theory is concerned with the register variable Tenor and interpersonal language which realizes Tenor. The theory emerged from the "Write it Right" research project led by Jim Martin and his colleagues in 1980s and 1990s. The group of researchers started exploring the semantics of the interpersonal across a wide range of discourse domains from a systemic functional angle. They studied in what context and by what linguistic resources people express their evaluation of the utterances they present and their attitude towards the communicative respondents. They also explored the rhetorical consequences associated with the use of different interpersonal means from a dialogic perspective (Martin & White, 2005). To these research ends, they developed Appraisal theory, which is particularly concerned with the language that expresses writers/speakers' emotion or value assessment about their own propositions or propositions by external sources, as well as their engagement with

external propositions. As White (2001a) summarized, Appraisal theory studies “what is at stake interpersonally both in individual utterances and as the text unfolds cumulatively” (p. 8). The Appraisal model therefore affords a systemic framework for exploring interpersonal meanings at the level of discourse semantics, and this makes it the most relevant approach to studying the deployment of interpersonal language in discussion sections of doctoral theses which generally require arguments to be made and sustained across stages of text (Bunton, 1999). The dialogic perspective of Appraisal theory also well suits the analysis of interpersonal language in the current data where alignment with readership is crucial for the acceptance of arguments (see 2.5).

1.3 Context of the data

The importance of context from the SFL perspective and its impact on language use has been explained in 1.2.1. Given that all data were collected from CAL, Warwick University, it may be helpful to provide some information about this physical context as well. In 50 years since its foundation, Warwick University has been developing at a rapid pace with respect to academic excellence in general and business and industry research in particular, regularly scoring highly on national and international university rankings³. CAL is “an

³ <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/about>

interdisciplinary centre”⁴ which offers a wide range of teaching/research programs with different focuses in the areas of ELT/Applied Linguistics at postgraduate level.

The identity of this centre has undergone some development in recent years; in 2008 its name changed from “Centre for English Language Teacher Education” (CELTE) to “Centre for Applied Linguistics,” perhaps to reflect a branching out from its ELT roots. Explicit Applied Linguistic activities have supplemented, but not replaced, the center’s more traditional ELT based activities. However, there are only two theses that were submitted before 2008 (in 2001 and 2007, respectively, when the center was represented as CELTE) and the others were all submitted from 2008 to 2012. During this period, the institutional culture of this center seems to remain stable despite the change of name. The faculty has not been subject to considerable variations during this about ten-year period. Particularly, people who supervised doctoral students before 2008 did not differ much from those after that year. The research students’ handbook that is used as guidelines for doing and writing research at this center seems to be the same within this period. Therefore, it can be assumed that the culture of CAL did not undergo dramatic change, which would not impact doctoral students’ thesis writing.

⁴ <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al>

According to the Center's webpage⁵, "Students prepare for the degree of PhD through a 3 year programme of full-time research and study, during which they work under the guidance of one or two supervisors, attending classes on research methods during the first year, and preparing a thesis of 80,000 words by the end of the third year." Students who study in the doctoral program at CAL are often from different countries with different backgrounds. Although it is acknowledged that doctoral theses vary in quality, all of the texts which I examined in this research at least have met the minimum requirements for awarding a doctorate. Given the status of Warwick University, it is reasonable to assume that students who can successfully gain the degree at this center are doing research at the recognized highest level. This also indicates that it would not be appropriate to presuppose that the L1 Chinese writers in my data are less competent perhaps particularly in linguistic ability than their counterparts (also see 2.3). The award of a doctoral degree to the writers in this research corpus is also indicative that their theses at least have gained acceptance by members of their discourse community and thus suggests that their deployment of interpersonal language for persuading the reader of their knowledge claims can be seen as effective. As a result, an exploration of the patterns of interpersonal language used in the current corpus should be able to reveal pedagogically

⁵ <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/degrees/researchdegrees>

helpful information to novice writers who are learning to write theses/dissertations.

1.4 Research questions

In section 1.1, I briefly stated a main aim of this research which is to explore interpersonal language in academic writing. A search of literature seems to show that a major strand of research focused on the comparison of interpersonal language produced by L1 and L2 English writers who generally are at or under Masters level of education (see 2.3). Many other studies often analyzed interpersonal language in published research articles (see 2.4) but seems much less often analyzed this feature in doctoral theses. Based on the research aim and research gap, I formed the following research questions:

1. What Appraisal options are used to manage the authors' interpersonal meanings in the discussion sections of doctoral theses in the discipline of ELT/Applied Linguistics at CAL, Warwick University?
2. Are there any systematic differences in the choices made by the L1 Chinese and L1 English writers, or not?
3. Are there any tendencies for co-articulating some Appraisal options? If there are, how do the co-articulation patterns contribute to realizing the rhetorical purpose of discussion sections?

The first question will be answered both qualitatively and quantitatively: qualitatively in the sense that to annotate stretches of language to Appraisal options is an interpretive act (see Chapter 6); and quantitatively to identify frequency of occurrences and to produce comparable data (see Chapter 7).

The second question will be answered quantitatively: the L₁C and L₁E texts will be treated as two sub-corpora and the normalized counts of Appraisal options identified within them will be statistically compared (see 7.2).

The third question will be answered qualitatively (see Chapter 8).

A less full-scale research aim is to pilot a pedagogic application of the findings derived from the above three questions and to see whether these findings can benefit novice writers who may need help with writer positioning and evaluation by raising their awareness of uses of interpersonal language.

1.5 Adopting a corpus-based approach

In order to answer these research questions, the methodology adopted was that of a corpus-based approach involving both quantitative and qualitative inquiry. It has been widely acknowledged that corpus-based study can provide empirical observations of naturally-occurring language use (Leech, 1992; McEnery & Hardie, 2012; McEnery & Wilson, 1996; McEnery, Xiao, & Tono, 2006; Stubbs, 2007; Teubert, 2005). Although large corpora were often used to describe a language variety in earlier days of corpus-based research, a recent trend

is to use small corpora designed for specific research questions to explore particular aspects of language use that are of research interest (Connor & Upton, 2004; Flowerdew, 2004). It is argued that research based on specialized corpora often complements quantitative analysis which focuses on word frequencies and collocations by enabling a more in-depth and context sensitive analysis of the “functionality” of language drawing upon “theoretical insights from systemics, genre and discourse analysis” (Flowerdew, 1998, p. 541).

The current research has involved a qualitative and a quantitative dimension. The most important qualitative strand concerned the data annotation (see Chapter 5 & Chapter 6). This formed the basis for a subsequent systematic quantitative comparison involving counting and comparing types of Appraisal categories in the whole corpus and between its two sub-corpora. As Schmied argued, “A stage of qualitative research is often a precursor for quantitative analysis, since, before linguistic phenomena are classified and counted, the categories for classification must be identified” (as cited in McEnery & Wilson, 1996, p. 62). A subsidiary qualitative strand dealt with a small-scale pedagogic trial of my corpus-based findings which aimed to make novice writers aware of different patterns of taking an authorial stance towards previous literature and towards the authors’ own findings (see Chapter 9). In light of these dimensions of work, it may be far from a straightforward task to situate the current research

within a particular paradigm, although it is customary to do so when discussing the approach of a study. However, raising this paradigmatic issue and making clear awareness of both quantitative and qualitative work within my research can benefit me as well as the reader to evaluate this research against relevant criteria.

1.6 Organization of the thesis

This thesis has 10 chapters in total. After this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews the perspective of academic discourse as a social practice and different approaches for describing interpersonal meanings in this discourse. It also reviews how L1, disciplinary, and institutional practices may have impact on interpersonal meaning-making in academic discourse, the advice on using interpersonal language from thesis writing guidebooks, as well as the corpus approach to language teaching and learning which suggests pedagogical potential of this approach to examining interpersonal language. Chapter 3 illustrates the Appraisal framework upon which the current study was based and particularly reviews research on Appraisal in academic discourse. Chapter 4 describes the methodology and explains the rationale for using a specialized corpus for this study. Chapter 5 describes the pilot study and the coding scheme established after pilot as well as brief explanations of each Appraisal feature in the scheme. Chapter 6 reports the main coding procedure. It elaborates the selection of the text span for coding and selection of interpersonal language for coding, followed by the

theoretically principled coding decisions and a modified coding scheme with an excerpt of fully coded text. Chapter 7 presents the quantitative results of the use of different Appraisal features in the corpus while Chapter 8 presents the qualitative results particularly regarding the co-articulations with three main options for making reference to previous literature and the use of two main options for making claims about the authors' own findings. Chapter 9 reports two sessions with MA students at CAL mainly including the purpose, organization, and participants' feedback. Chapter 10 provides an evaluation of this study and concludes the thesis by stating what has been achieved by this study, some possibilities of future research, and how this study has influenced on my own use of interpersonal language in academic writing.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter first briefly reviews the interactive nature of academic writing (2.1). It then compares three main approaches to studying interpersonal meaning in terms of their suitability for the data of this research (2.2). It continues reviewing relevant studies using these approaches whilst commenting on their implications for L1, disciplinary, and institutional influences on the use of interpersonal language (2.3 & 2.4). Following these, it describes the task of making interpersonal meanings as required by the “part-genre” (“i.e. different sections of the article, such as the introduction and the discussion,” Dudley-Evans, 1998, p. 9) of discussion sections of doctoral theses and explains particular challenges for novice writers in this section (2.5). The chapter ends with a review of advice on the use of interpersonal language from dissertation/thesis writing guidebooks (2.6) and an explanation of benefits of corpus-based teaching and learning in general and the potential of the corpus-informed findings of this current study as complement to the relative scarcity of advice available and clarification about some contradictory advice offered in the reviewed guidebooks (2.7).

2.1 Interaction in academic discourse

The view that academic writing is a purely objective process of reporting knowledge has been challenged by a number of studies on academic and

professional discourses within the traditions of genre and English for Academic Purposes (Bhatia, 1993; Connor, 2004; Hyland, 1999a, 2000; Myers, 1999; Swales, 1990). It is now widely argued that academic writing is indeed a process of knowledge building with the main purpose of explicitly or implicitly persuading the reader in the discourse community of the knowledge claims being made (Hyland, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2004). In this sense, academic writing is interactive and academic knowledge is socially constructed.

This view of academic writing as an interactive process of knowledge negotiation between the writer and the reader brings up the importance of “discourse community” (Swales, 1999). The successful construction of academic texts to an extent depends on using language in acceptable ways expected by discourse community members who simultaneously establish constraints on these norms (Paltridge, 2001; Swales, 1999). The meanings of academic texts are negotiated between the writer and the reader and are influenced by the social and linguistic conventions of the discourse community to which they belong (Hyland, 1999a, 1999b, 2000). All these statements imply that academic writing is a disciplinary embedded practice through which knowledge is constructed in conformity to disciplinary norms and conventions. When presenting ideational content in academic texts, writers also need to draw

on interpersonal meanings to frame it as appealing to readers in their discourse community.

Duszak (1997) has noted that analysis of academic discourse would not obtain thorough and insightful understanding if interpersonal meanings are disregarded. It is through interpersonal meanings that the writer evaluates the content of text, and responds to relevant external utterances as well as potential responses (Martin & White, 2005), which as a result reflect the writer's awareness of the voice of the reader and of the backdrop against which a given communication takes place. As Hyland (1998) emphasized, "A writer's sense of audience is critical because gaining acceptance of academic claims involves both rational exposition and the manipulation of rhetorical and interactive features" (p. 440). The importance of interpersonal meanings to academic writing is now increasingly recognized, and research on interpersonal meanings and evaluative language from various linguistic perspectives has proliferated, which has produced a range of terms to describe interpersonal meanings.

The diverse terms in use can be distinguished in the light of three constructs: language items vs. language user perspective, opinion about entities vs. opinion about propositions, and separate approach vs. combining approach (Thompson & Hunston, 2000). One can understand evaluative language by seeing the linguistic items in themselves having connotations or by seeing language users

as having attitude. Evaluative language can also be understood in terms of the writer's positive or negative feelings or attitude toward something (attitudinal meaning) and of the writer's assessment of the likelihood of something (epistemic meaning). In terms of whether a term makes distinction between these two types of interpersonal meaning, Thompson and Hunston (2000) distinguished between "combining approach" (e.g. Conrad and Biber 2000, *stance* including both attitudinal and epistemic stance) and "separate approach" (e.g. Halliday 1994, modalization and modulation). Thompson and Hunston (2000) themselves took the combining approach and from a language user perspective used the umbrella term *evaluation* to refer to "the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about" (p. 5). One function of evaluation pointed out by this definition is that of telling the reader what the writer thinks about something. Alongside it are two other functions, of building relations between the writer and the reader and of organizing the discourse (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). This discussion of *evaluation* is close to Hunston's (1989, 1994, 2011) categorization of *evaluation* into the evaluation of status, value, and relevance. As explained in Hunston (1989, 1994, 2011), an evaluative act can indicate the particular type of an object being evaluated (e.g. a fact or an assumption) and reflect the writer's degree of certainty and commitment towards an entity or a proposition and make

the reader see things in a particular way (status). The evaluation of status is therefore concerned with what is between “it is” and “it isn’t,” which has some common grounds with Modality (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) and Engagement (Martin & White, 2005) (Hunston, 2011). An evaluation simultaneously can reflect the writer’s opinion about an object in terms of the “good-bad” scale (value). Occasionally, an evaluative act can signal the significance of an object or a stretch of text to be evaluated and mark the discourse boundary (relevance).

The complexity of functions of evaluation naturally implies a variety of linguistic resources that realize them and implies that the understanding of evaluative language is difficult but worthwhile. However, because of its complexity, a great number of studies have dealt with evaluative language by isolating certain aspects to focus on and interpreted its use drawing on different conceptualizations of evaluation, for example, Conrad and Biber’s (2000) analysis of evaluative adverbials that mark epistemic, attitudinal, and style stance, Thompson and Zhou’s (2000) analysis of adverbial disjuncts (e.g. *obviously, in addition*) that signal conjunction in text, and most studies reviewed in the following sections of 2.3 and 2.4. The next section reviews three common approaches to exploiting interpersonal language, particularly from the perspective of their fitness to the current study.

2.2 Approaches to describing interpersonal language

Three common approaches to studying interpersonal language in academic writing include: *epistemic modality* (Lyons, 1977), *metadiscourse* (Hyland, 2005), and *appraisal* (Martin & White, 2005). Lyons (1977) defined epistemic modality as “any utterance in which the speaker explicitly qualifies his commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed by the sentence he utters, whether this qualification is made explicit in the verbal component...or in the prosodic or paralinguistic component” (p. 797). As indicated, formulations of epistemic modality are interpreted by reference to speakers’ certainty or uncertainty about the truth-value of their propositions. Therefore, it seems that such interpretations understand interpersonal meaning-making as primarily for the purpose to express the writer/speaker’s own state of mind.

In contrast to this truth-value perspective, Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal theory described interpersonal language from a “dialogic perspective,” which sees interpersonal meaning-making as primarily for the purpose of negotiating viewpoints with the prior utterances and the actual or potential response in a given communication. Similar to Appraisal theory’s dialogic perspective is Hyland’s (2005) reader-oriented perspective on interpersonal language – *metadiscourse*. Hyland (2005) described metadiscourse as devices

that the writer employs to guide the audience through an unfolding discourse (*interactive metadiscourse*) and to guide the audience into the writer's intended way of understanding their discourse (*interactional metadiscourse*). This distinction between interactive and interactional functions of interpersonal language corresponds closely to Thompson and Thetela's (1995) categorization of interaction in written discourse – a reader-friendly interaction which indicates the writer's attention to the reader's concerns about the flow of information in a text and a writer-friendly interaction which indicates the writers' overt expressions of their attitude and stance to influence the reader.

Applying Thompson and Hunston's (2003) three parameters of interpersonal language (see 2.1) to these three approaches, firstly, it appears that they all take a language user perspective on interpersonal meanings. Secondly, all the three approaches could be taken as examples of a separate approach. Martin and White's Appraisal theory (2005) separately deals with language users' opinions on attitudinal meaning by its sub-system Attitude and opinions on propositional meaning by Engagement. However, Lyons' (1997) definition of epistemic modality indicates a focus on language users' qualification of propositional meaning, but without particular concern about users' attitude towards entities or phenomena. Similarly, Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse seems

to closely look at language users' opinions on propositions but not explicitly at users' feelings or attitude about something despite the attitude marker category.

The semantics of epistemic modality operates along a cline of likelihood expressing different degrees of probability, which is often categorized into certain (high), probably (medium), and possible (low) by researchers (e.g. Hyland and Milton, 1997). Such categorization appears too broad and the distinction between categories of different degrees of probability seemed to lack a principled and contextual account (Hoye, as cited in Letica, 2009). Appraisal theory can overcome this problem in that it is a systematic, functional approach to modeling interpersonal language as a set of meaning-making choices in terms of both cultural context (*genre* in SFL) and situational context (*register*).

Metadiscourse also comprises what epistemic modality classifies as categories of probability, for example hedges and boosters in metadiscourse, although it interprets the function of such categories from a reader-oriented perspective which presents the writer's guidance for the reader on how to interpret a text. Additionally, metadiscourse consists of many other categories which function to help the reader understand the textual organization. For example, the category of *frame markers* functions to "refer to discourse acts, sequences, or text stages" (e.g. "*finally* / *to conclude*"), and the category of *endophoric markers* signals "information in other parts of the text" (e.g. "noted

above”) while the category of *evidentials* signals “source of information from other texts” (e.g. “according to X / (Y, 1990) / Z states”) (Hyland, 2010, p. 128). As can be seen, compared to epistemic modality, metadiscourse provides a more delicate classification of interpersonal language.

However, compared to Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal theory, it seems that some categorization of metadiscourse still groups many linguistic resources that can express different authorial positions under one umbrella category. For example, in metadiscourse, “evidential” covers all expressions that refer to information from other sources. Nevertheless, evidentials does not concern the issue of authorial attitude towards the external source being brought into the writer’s text. This distinction is drawn by Appraisal theory which classifies three categories representing different authorial positioning (Distance: disagreement, Endorse: agreement, and Acknowledge: neutral, see 5.2.2.3, 5.2.2.5, 6.4.6, 6.4.7, & 6.4.8). Such categorization indeed would be more effective in the analysis of interpersonal language that is used in the current data – discussion sections of doctoral theses, where writers often need to critically engage with the literature they have reviewed so as to discuss their own findings.

Moreover, Appraisal theory adopts a dialogic perspective on interpersonal language by which writers express attitude towards the “value positions being referenced by the text and with respect to those they address”

(Martin & White, 2005, p. 92). As noted above, when explaining interpersonal language, Appraisal theory does not see it as indicating the degree of the writer's commitment to or certainty of the truth-value of propositions being referenced. Instead, Appraisal theory is concerned with whether it acknowledges the possibility of dialogue or not (*heterogloss* or *monogloss*). Where dialogue is acknowledged, Appraisal theory is concerned with whether more or less dialogic space is made (*expansive heterogloss* or *contractive heterogloss*) for negotiating with the potentially divergent viewpoints in the prior and subsequent discourse of a given communication. Such way of understanding interpersonal language seems to make Appraisal theory a more suitable approach for studying the interpersonal resources used in the current data.

Although in doctoral theses writers are required to display an original contribution to knowledge and therefore writers can be seen as writing as experts, they and their theses are still subject to assessment by the examiners before writers obtain the degree and even by a wider range of members in their discourse community once the theses are published. In this sense, thesis writers also can be seen as writing as students, and doctoral theses can be seen as what Nesi and Gardner (2012) classified as assessed student writing, which is generally read and evaluated by academics “who award a grade which contributes to the student's degree progression” (p. 23).

Therefore, a major task for thesis writers is to convince the potential reader of their own arguments about findings. They need to consider whether the potential reader would share some similar viewpoints with them or have doubt about their propositions. According to different imagined reader, thesis writers need to construct arguments with different positioning towards their propositions and towards the reader. This need is actually also Appraisal theory's central concern, as Martin and White (2005) stated:

It is concerned with how writers/speakers construe for themselves particular authorial identities or personae, with how they align or disalign themselves with actual or potential respondents, and with how they construct for their texts an intended or ideal audience. (1)

The above comparisons of the three approaches have suggested that Appraisal theory covers a wide range of semantic categories of interpersonal language which present the writer's attitudinal evaluation, propositional evaluation and adjustments of both types of evaluation (see details in 3.1). It adopts a dialogic perspective to understand the function of these categories in terms of whether they represent the writer's awareness of the reader's potential responses to the authorial propositions and of divergent views in a given communication. It also concerns whether the interpersonal resources construe an imagined reader who may accept or reject the authorial propositions and whether they make space for other views in the discourse community.

Therefore, Appraisal theory appears to be the most suitable one for the current

data of doctoral theses where writers have to construct arguments that can persuade their examiners for the award of degree (see 2.5).

2.3 Interpersonal meaning-making and L1 rhetoric

The above section has reviewed three approaches to describing interpersonal language. This section looks at previous research which adopted these approaches to study interpersonal language in academic discourse. One major focus of research effort is on the comparison of interpersonal language in English argumentative discourse produced by L1 and L2 writers. These studies generally found that L2 writers tend to rely on a smaller range of epistemic expressions and restricted grammatical categories that realize such expressions (Hyland & Milton, 1997; Chen, 2010; McEnery & Kifle, 2002; Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2005).

Specifically, in Hyland and Milton's (1997) analysis of epistemic markers in argumentative essays by Hong Kong and British students of the same educational level, the ten most frequently occurring markers that were found in their study accounted for three quarters of the total markers in the Hong Kong corpus. While both Hong Kong and British corpora displayed preference for epistemic modal verbs and adverbials, the former showed far more use of modal verbs but much less of adverbials. The Hong Kong corpus

was further found to contain more epistemic markers signaling higher degree of certainty which presented the writers' claims as too assertive, but the British corpus contained more markers of probability which constructed more tentative claims. This preference for stronger assertions was also reflected in Chen's (2010) observation that L1 Chinese writers more frequently employed epistemic items of *sure* but the items of *possible(-ly)*, *probably*, and *(un)likely* less frequently. In contrast, L1 Eritrean students preferred making statements showing less degree of certainty in argumentations, although these students were still found to rely on a narrower range of epistemic markers as evident in their overuse of modal verbs and adverbs of possibility (McEnery & Kifle, 2002).

However, a methodological limitation of the above mentioned studies seems to be that their analysis of interpersonal language revolved around an "a priori" list of linguistic items collected according to previous relevant studies and the analysts' own intuitions and experience. For example, in Hyland and Milton (1997), an inventory of 75 lexical expressions of qualification and certainty were selected for examination in terms of their frequency of occurrences in academic writing as suggested in literature on modality and reference grammar books. Chen (2010) even analyzed only 9 modal verbs, adjectives, and adverbs which were considered to be commonly used epistemic

devices by L2 writers in academic writing. Although these items analyzed in the above mentioned studies were said to be characteristic of academic writing as an umbrella genre, they may not be equally characteristic of the discourse under investigation in the current study. If an “a priori” list was used in the current study, some important interpersonal devices may even be neglected. Such restricted scope of analysis would naturally result in a partial picture about the use of interpersonal language by L1 and L2 writers. Moreover, the interpersonal items analyzed in the studies referred to above tended to be loosely categorized on a scale extending from minimum to maximum certainty that an item indicates, and interpretation of the rhetorical consequences of these items therefore may be overlapped and less principled, which would not be very helpful to novice writers to grasp the nuances between some items. It is also for this reason that the current study adopted Appraisal theory which groups interpersonal language into a range of functional categories and provides a systematic account of both language users’ attitudinal positionings and positionings regarding propositional meaning.

Despite these limitations, a common finding in the aforementioned studies is that L2 writers’ use of epistemic modality demonstrates more similarities to L1 writers’ use as their L2 proficiency increases (e.g. Chen, 2010; Hyland & Milton, 1997). For one thing, this finding is encouraging as it

suggests the development of L2 writers' language ability. For another thing, it seems that the native pattern is viewed as somehow the norm of using epistemic modality in such contrastive studies. Although there is a tendency to see L2 writers as weaker in using interpersonal language, some studies have shown that L1 writers also have problem with this task. For example, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2005) noted that the L1 Masters students in their research were still heavily dependent on using the five central modals (*can, could, may, might, would*) to express interpersonal meanings. Therefore, it seems to be more reasonable to adopt an open-minded approach to comparing L1 and L2 writing corpora which avoids presupposing that the L2 corpus will employ narrower range of interpersonal resources or will show more inappropriate uses.

Particularly in research writing, such as the data of doctoral theses in the current study, the terminology of "broadly English proficient (BEP)" and "narrowly English proficient (NEP)" scholars and researchers (Swales, 2004) seems to be more appropriate for describing writers of different first languages. The BEP members generally are both linguistically and rhetorically proficient whereas the NEP ones generally need EAP help in certain areas. Both the L1 English and L1 Chinese doctoral students in the current data may well represent junior writers in the research world, and they also can be BEP irrespective of

their native language, provided they have already had substantial experience in their disciplinary practice.

Although the first language itself cannot be the determining factor for different patterns of interpersonal language found in L1 and L2 writing corpora, the knowledge about L1 rhetorical conventions that is carried by L2 writers is still suggested as projecting influence upon the aspect of interpersonal meaning-making. Both the L1 Iranian scholars and undergraduates were found to use a low frequency of emphatics and attitude markers in conclusion sections of research articles and argumentative essays, respectively (Abdollahzadeh, 2011; Gholami, Nejad, & Pour, 2014). The rhetorical behavior of the Iranian scholars and students seemed to be linked to their assumption of establishing acceptability of arguments by impersonal language, which is traceable to the impact of Iranian culture that discourages assertiveness and overt display of confidence (Abdollahzadeh, 2011; Gholami, Nejad, & Pour, 2014).

Lee and Casal's (2014) contrastive analysis of metadiscourse (using Hyland, 2005 model) in results and discussion chapters from engineering Masters theses written in English and Spanish showed that the English texts employed more metadiscourse overall and particularly more transitions, endophorics, and evidentials as means of navigating the reader through the writer's argumentation, which appears to be associated with the Anglophone

writer-responsible style of signaling relationships between ideas and between the writer's own research and other research for the reader. The Spanish texts in contrast displayed more engagement markers and far more boosters than hedges, probably attributable to the inclination of Spanish rhetoric to show solidarity with readers and to write in an assertive manner. All these findings further confirmed the inexorable link between the use of interpersonal features and culture-based ways of interacting with audience and making arguments.

Likewise, Chinese students' overuse of certainty markers may be ascribed to the Chinese rhetoric view of "certainty as a sign of strength and hedging as a sign of weakness" (Chen, 2010, p. 17). A group of Asian students (L1 writers of Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Indonesian) were also observed to use a pronounced higher frequency rates of amplifiers (e.g. *always*, *never*, *very*) and emphatics (e.g. *certain(-ly)*, *complete(-ly)*, *definite(-ly)*) in argumentative essays due to their L1 rhetoric view of amplification and intensification as the "means of persuasion intended to project a high degree of the writer's conviction, sincerity, and truthfulness" (Hinkel, 2003, p. 1058). However, another study by Hinkel of devices of indirectness (Hinkel, 1997) showed a different picture. While the L1 Chinese sub-corpus showed a significantly lower frequency of "possibility hedges" (e.g. *perhaps*, *possibly*), it also showed a similar frequency rate of "lexical hedges" (e.g. *about*, *maybe*,

sort of) to that in the L1 English sub-corpus (p. 372). Additionally, “quality hedges” (e.g. *as is (well) known, (as) people say*, p. 372) were also favored by these L1 Chinese writers in that their functions of “shifting the responsibility for the factuality and the truth-value of the claim, and/or a potential threat to the reader’s face from the writer to an external source of information” seem to be merited by Chinese rhetoric (p. 373). From these discussions, it appears that there are conflicting views on whether Chinese rhetoric appreciates the use of hedged statements and that L1 Chinese writers in different interpersonal language related studies have demonstrated different patterns of using markers of tentativeness.

Variations in L1 rhetorical conventions can only explain to an extent the divergences identified in interpersonal meaning-making, and L1 may not even have significant influence on this aspect of writing for other novice writers at higher education level such as doctoral students (see 7.1 & 7.2). Proponents of process-oriented approach to teaching academic writing also criticized contrastive rhetoric for its focus on the writing products but disregard of the writing process that writers may have gone through. Results of contrastive analysis tended to be used in the prescriptive way as somewhat norms of good or standard English when they were applied to teaching writing (Connor, 1998; 2002; Leki, 1991). Moreover, earlier contrastive rhetoric studies often

compared rhetorical conventions of “big cultures” (Atkinson, 2004; Holliday, 1999) such as geographical and national cultures, but they less frequently attended to those of “small cultures” such as disciplinary cultures (Connor, 2002). Therefore, to fill this gap, contrastive research on discourse across academic disciplines has burgeoned, just as Connor (2004) pointed out, there is a shift in the focus of contrastive rhetoric from the “EAP study of student essays to the study of writing in many disciplines and genres” (p. 291). For doctoral students, specific disciplinary conventions of using interpersonal language may be in more need for them to learn so as to write in ways that members of their disciplines will find acceptable. In fact, many studies have revealed that the amount and the types of interpersonal resources in academic discourse vary among disciplines, which in particular is reviewed in the next section.

2.4 Interpersonal meaning-making and disciplinary/institutional practice

The prevailing idea arising from the cross-disciplinary research into academic discourse is that language forms and disciplinary culture dynamically interact with each other. That is, language forms as means of expressing knowledge reflect and are simultaneously shaped by discipline-specific values and practices of constructing and communicating knowledge (Bhatia, 2002; Hyland, 2000; Paltridge, 2001; Parry, 1998, 2007). Findings of studies with a

focus on interpersonal language are congruent with this idea. These studies generally explored or compared the use of interpersonal language in a range of academic discourses from the broadly categorized “hard” and “soft” disciplines (Becher & Trowler, 2001) (e.g. Dahl, 2004; Dueñas, 2007; Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2001, 2002, 2010; Li & Wharton, 2012; McGrath and Kuteeva, 2012; Rizomilioti, 2006; Samraj, 2008; Vázquez & Giner, 2008). Three particular interests of these studies include the interpersonal language of making interaction with previous discourse, authorial presence, and adjustment of the author’s certainty in propositions. These three interests are discussed in turn.

Relevant literature on the first research interest has identified contrasting tendencies in the number and form of references to previous discourse. Masters dissertations in Biology showed greater density of references and preference for non-integral forms (“the researcher occurs either in parenthesis or is referred to elsewhere by a superscript number or via some other device,” Swales, 1990, p. 148) whereas Philosophy texts showed lower density of references and preference for integral forms (“the name of the researcher occurs in the actual citing sentence as some sentence-element,” Swales, 1990, p. 148) (Samraj, 2008). A similar finding was noted in Hyland (2010) where Masters and doctoral theses from Biology actually showed the greatest number of citations among all other disciplines examined. The

discrepancy in reference density seems to be a result of the presence or absence of pressure to locate the author's research within the related field in Biology and Philosophy, respectively (Samraj, 2008). Hyland (2010) also suggested the impact of Biology writing style guides which state the need of "showing how current research relates to, and builds on, the work of others" (p. 140).

The discrepancy in reference form may be ascribed to different disciplinary emphasis on the object (e.g. Biology) or the authors (e.g. Philosophy) of previous inquiries (Samraj, 2008). The discipline-specific practice of knowledge production seems to shape the prominence given to authors being referred to (Parry, 1998, 2007). Whereas this practice in hard science is "to assert new knowledge against a background of established knowledge" and thus the object of inquiry of previous research is highlighted in citations, in soft science new knowledge production is to "persuade the reader about a new perspective" and thus the source and perspective being referred is emphasized (Parry, 1998, p. 288). All the findings about different preferences for using integral or non-integral form of citation in different disciplines are useful for student writers to know, but they seemed to focus only on the mechanism of citation and did not show different positionings that the authors take while using the two forms of citation. However, student writers sometimes perceive the citation of external sources as not having a particular function

(Coffin, 2009), and therefore it would be more useful to let them understand the evaluative stance that different citation forms may indicate in a given context, as has been done in the current study.

The second research interest, as noted above, is about interpersonal resources for creating authorial presence via the use of “self mention” (in Hyland’s 2005 term). A few studies have identified a stronger authorial presence in academic texts from soft science disciplines than in those from hard science disciplines (e.g. Dueñas, 2007; Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2001, 2010; Samraj, 2008). Samraj (2008) observed a stronger authorial presence in introductions of Masters dissertations in Philosophy as evident by the frequent use of self mention primarily for the purpose of presenting the author’s arguments, but noticed a weaker authorial presence in those in Biology as evident by the infrequent use primarily for presenting the author’s as the conductor of research procedures. Hyland (2001, 2010) presented similar results showing that self mention was more salient in Masters and doctoral theses from soft disciplines of Applied Linguistics, Business Studies, and Public Administration. This tendency is also reflected in the Business Management research articles by a considerable use of self mention (Dueñas, 2007; Harwood, 2005).

Such contrasting degree of authorial presence again seems to be constrained by the disciplinary epistemology base. Knowledge in hard science is commonly regarded as impersonal, objective and reproducible by other researchers following same procedures, and therefore the voice of research reporter is blurred (Belcher, 1989; Parry, 1998, 2007). However, knowledge in soft science is more “individualistic and interpretive” and thus the voice of an argument or perspective needs to be highlighted (Parry, 1998, p. 279). With a closer examination of linguistic realizations of self mention, Dueñas (2007) uncovered the more frequent use of the plural forms of self mention (tokens of exclusive *we*, *us*, and *our*) in Business Management research articles and their presence even in single-authored Business Management research articles. The mixed use of exclusive *we* and *I* was also observed to be generally more common than the use of one item or the other independently in Linguistics research articles (Vassileva, 1998). Observing a similar tendency to use exclusive *we* in research articles from eight soft and hard disciplines, Hyland (2001) stated that the use of exclusive *we* can be a strategic way of promoting the author’s “unique procedural choices or views” with a less degree of personal intrusion than the use of first personal singular pronoun *I* (p. 217).

Not only were the amount of and the favored realizations of self mention found to differ in academic discourse from hard and soft disciplines,

but the function of self mention that is frequently used was also found to vary among different types of academic discourse or even among the same type but with different readership. The Business Management research articles that are locally published in Spanish showed significantly fewer incidences of plural self mention in the discussion section whereas their counterparts that are internationally published in English commonly used plural self mention for a main function to evaluate the strengths and limitations of their research. This finding in some sense echoes Hyland's (2001) argument about self mention as a "powerful rhetorical strategy for emphasising a writer's contribution" in published research articles (p. 207).

In fact, doctoral theses also demonstrated a high frequency of self mention used to promote the writer's contributions (Hyland, 2010). This congruent finding implies that doctoral students behave similar to published academics at least in their inclination to mark authorial presence in writing. However, undergraduate and Masters students behaved differently showing hesitation about using self mention (Hyland, 2002, 2010). The undergraduates seemed to particularly reluctant to use self mention but chose to use agentless passives and dummy *it* subjects where they need to make claims (Hyland, 2002).

Interview comments from the Masters students (Hyland, 2010) indicated their perceived view of self mention as in conflict with what they have been informed about the objectivity and formality in academic writing. Similarly, the undergraduates expressed their avoidance of using self mention as their awareness of the objective nature of academic writing (Hyland, 2002). Nevertheless, all these students appeared not to be aware of self mention as an interpersonal resource for “establishing a personal authority based on confidence and command of their arguments” (Hyland, 2002, p. 1104). This result suggests a possible gap in academic writing instruction on the use of some interpersonal devices and relevant support can be sought in several studies.

Paltridge (2002) found that the guides and handbooks did not reflect the full range of thesis structures that are actually adopted by dissertations/theses under examination. Gabrielatos and McEnery (2005) reported that the frequent use of modal verbs in their Masters dissertations corpus may be attributed to pedagogical material’s concentration on modal auxiliaries as examples for expressing interpersonal meanings and that particularly the L2 students’ reluctance to use *perhaps* may attribute to pedagogic description of this item as an informal expression. Hyland and Milton (1997) also suggested the emphasis on explicitness and directness by the instruction of academic writing in Hong

Kong as potential cause of Hong Kong students' overuse of intensified assertions. Similarly, McEnery and Kifle (2002) suggested the emphasis on making propositions with degree of uncertainty in the writing textbook used by Eritrean students in their study may account for their overuse of tentative markers. Therefore, it seems necessary to raise the awareness of novice writers, particularly doctoral students in pursuit of more secure membership in their disciplines, about the actual practice that acknowledged expert members (e.g. published writers in the above studies) follow. It also seems beneficial to raise novice writers' awareness of diverse interpersonal resources and their functions so as to help them manage this generally acknowledged challenging task in academic writing.

The third research interest concerns the use of interpersonal language to adjust the author's certainty in propositions. Rizomilioti (2006) compared the use of three types of epistemic modality (downtoners, boosters, and indicators of certainty, p. 63) and found that research articles from Biology, Archaeology, and Literary Criticism differ in both the number of and the preferred type of these epistemic markers. Biology articles preferred indicators of certainty (e.g. *show* and *conclusion*, p. 62-3) and Archaeology preferred downtoners (e.g. *may*, *indicate*, *likely*, *probably*, and *possibility*, p. 58-60) whereas Literary Criticism favored boosters (e.g. *clearly* and *evident*, p. 61-2). Li and Wharton (2012) also

noted a more salient use of boosters in Literary Criticism by undergraduates from a university in China. Considering that Literary Criticism might be categorized as a soft discipline, these findings of a prevalence of boosters seems to be some surprising in that academic discourses from soft disciplines are commonly observed to have a wider distribution of hedges (e.g. Hyland, 2010; Vázquez & Giner, 2008). Therefore, it can be assumed that some characteristics of interpersonal language identified in other disciplines within the soft knowledge domain may not always be true of another discipline within the same domain. As Rizomilioti (2006) maintained: “although in some cases there is some indication of existing tendencies, it is not always possible to generalize about frequencies of epistemic devices in the humanities and science as a whole” (p. 66)

This view seems to be supported by McGrath and Kuteeva’s (2012) finding that Pure Mathematics research articles even share the commonality with the soft discipline of Philosophy in a high number of engagement markers of “shared knowledge reference” (p. 166). These mathematics articles also showed strikingly lower number of hedges than did Physics research articles in Hyland (2005b). The sparse use of hedges in mathematics corpus appears to be related to the disciplinary expectation of “100% conviction in a proposition” of a publishable result as indicated by some authors of these articles. Their

comments suggested that using hedges to weaken the author's commitment to propositions is considered inappropriate but hedges for mitigating the "general applicability, relevance interest or scope" and speculations about next stage of research are acceptable (McGrath & Kuteeva, 2012, p. 166).

In addition to the specific disciplinary culture constraints on using interpersonal language as reviewed so far, some other studies also revealed the constraints of research type and local institutions. The abstracts of empirical study-based research articles in *Applied Linguistics* showed statistically significantly more boosters than did those of non-empirical study based articles (e.g. review articles, theoretical articles, methodological articles, etc., p. 2797), which is probably due to the nature of the support on which knowledge claims are based in these two research types (Hu & Cao, 2011). The more solid support for claims in empirical research such as systematically elicited primary data enables the authors to use more boosters indicating a stronger degree of certainty and commitment. However, the support in non-empirical research such as "secondary sources of data, anecdotal examples, informal observations, theoretical speculations" would lead the authors to use fewer boosters in order to qualify their claims and withhold commitment (Hu & Cao, 2011, p. 2806).

Further from a cross-language perspective, Hu and Cao (2011) compared the patterning of hedges and boosters in Chinese abstracts from

Chinese-medium journals (CA-CJ in their abbreviation), their matching English abstracts from Chinese-medium journals (EA-CJ), and English abstracts from English-medium journals (EA-EJ). The EA-CJ was found to employ much fewer incidences of boosters than CA-CJ, but EA-CJ did not differ significantly from EA-EJ in the number of boosters. Interestingly, Hu and Cao (2011) did not regard this result as indicative of Chinese authors' awareness of English rhetorical norms, for the reason that the findings that EA-CJ did not differ significantly from their matching CA-CJ in the number of hedges but still used far fewer hedges than did EA-EJ. Hu and Cao's (2011) inference is that the number of hedges in EA-CJ would approximate that in EA-EJ if those Chinese authors had realized the tendency to use hedges for tentative stance in English research writing. Therefore, they suggested that the "markedly lower incidence of both boosters (compared with the Chinese abstracts) and hedges (compared with the abstracts in the English-medium journals) in the English abstracts of the Chinese-medium journals lies in the English proficiency of the Chinese applied linguists" (Hu & Cao, 2011, p. 2806).

However, given that Hu and Cao's (2011) data are research articles published in leading Chinese and English journals of Applied Linguistics, it seems hard to view those Chinese authors as having a weaker command of English language. More importantly, it could also be possible that the use of

hedges and boosters in English abstracts from Chinese-medium journals was influenced by the authors' translation of their matching Chinese abstract. For example, it is possible that the word choice which the authors selected to convey an intended tentative stance is actually not a proper hedge device in English. As Kranich (2009) found, "when a not strictly equivalent modal element is chosen by the translator, one tends to find expressions in the German translations that refer to a greater certainty than the modal in the English source" (p. 26). Holmes (1982) also stated that not all linguistic devices for expressing epistemic modality can "transfer or translate without problems from one language to another" (p. 14).

Other research has suggested local institutional culture as a more influential factor in light of more variations in using metadiscourse found between two institutional contexts than between two disciplines (Li & Wharton, 2012). This study found that the L1 Chinese undergraduate students at a UK university used self mention more frequently than did their counterparts at a university in China, although L1 Chinese writers are previously reported (e.g. Bloch & Chi, 1995) to be reluctant to use direct authorial presence. The L1 Chinese students in the UK context also used more "standard evidentials" while referring to disciplinary literature probably owing to the emphasis on citation conventions and issues of plagiarism by the writing instruction in this

institutional context, although previous studies revealed that Chinese undergraduate students seemed unaware of consequences of plagiarism and of standard forms of citation (Li & Wharton, 2012).

In light of all studies reviewed in this and the previous section, it can be summarized that cross-cultural variability of rhetoric by itself cannot fully explain discrepancies in the use of interpersonal language in academic discourse. Discipline-specific and local academic context are also powerful factors in shaping academic writing. Therefore, the absence of either factor cannot provide a comprehensive understanding of language use, and particularly interpersonal language use as relevant to the present study, in academic discourse.

Dahl (2004) argued that it is the interplay of both disciplinary and L1 writing culture that shapes the patterning of textual metadiscourse. It seems that disciplinary culture can transcend national culture in research writing in disciplines such as Medicine with more stable and homogenous knowledge basis and structure for research reporting, as evident by the similar pattern of little metadiscourse that functions as discourse organizers and navigators in Medicine research articles written in English, Norwegian, and French (Dahl, 2004). On the other hand, the role of national culture seems to be more salient in research writing in disciplines such as Economics and Linguistics where knowledge basis is marked as heterogeneous and research data are more subject

to interpretation (Dahl, 2004). For example, English/Norwegian research articles showed a greater density of textual metadiscourse than did the French articles (Dahl, 2004), and Economics journal articles by English academics also revealed a more frequent use of metatext than did those by Finnish academics (Mauranen, 1993). The national rhetorical culture of explicit textual organization and reader orientation seems to account for this discrepancy in research articles across languages (Dahl, 2004; Mauranen, 1993).

As Yakhontova (2006) summarized, the “ever-lasting, two-way process of culture and discourse interaction may be rather covert and subordinated to traditions established in various academic milieus and research fields” (p. 164). The view of discipline as a “homogeneous” community may need to be reconsidered (Baynham, 2000; Lea & Street, 2000). It may be more appropriate to see discipline as “heterogeneous” in nature as diversity is prevalent across and within disciplines (Baynham, 2000, p. 18). Becher (1989) also explained that discipline is subject to temporal change of knowledge domains as well as national and institutional diversity in education system and intellectual tradition. For example, writing expectations are divergent across departments and instructors as well as disciplines as reflected in writing guidelines used in university settings (Lea & Street, 1999). Therefore, the understanding of academic writing solely through the interpretation of disciplinary practice cannot

delineate the whole picture as it does not help to understand academic writing in specific settings, within which local factors such as “the system of training embodied in a set of required core courses” and “the specific writing tasks in each other those core courses” (Casanave, 1995, p. 83). In short, disciplines can be seen as including a range of “contingent, specialised groupings – such as university departments” (Li & Wharton, 2012, p. 354), and previous studies have suggested local academic practice can exert more direct impact on writing than a wider disciplinary practice. The implications of these studies for interpersonal meaning-making across disciplines and institutions also inform the rationale for my selection of doctoral theses produced within the same discipline and the same educational context.

The focus of the studies being reviewed so far is on the use of epistemic modality or metadiscourse at the clause level. The analysis of interpersonal resources in these studies also often attended separately to their use for presenting the writers’ own arguments in relatively short argumentative essays (e.g. Chen, 2010; Hyland & Milton, 1997; McEnery & Kifle, 2002) or their use for interacting with previous discourse with more focus on frequency and form of citations but not necessarily analyzed the authorial stance towards it (e.g. Hyland, 2010; Samraj, 2008). It also seems that hardly any study examines the use of interpersonal language at the interface between presenting the writers’

own claims and projecting claims from other research, which is seen as a central task for doctoral students in writing discussion sections (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006). The fulfillment of this task will require writers to use a range of different interpersonal resources in combination and typically across a stretch of texts, which can be seen as a dynamic construal of interpersonal meanings at the discourse level. This is what the present study attempts to investigate based on Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal theory. Description of Appraisal theory and Appraisal-based studies on interpersonal language are reviewed in Chapter 3.

2.5 Interpersonal meaning-making in the doctoral thesis

As explained in the introductory chapter, SFL views language use as being subject to both genre (context of culture) and register (context of situation) (see 1.2.1). Genre, from the functional perspective, is defined as “a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture” (Martin, 2010, p. 19). This definition implies that genres are social activities for some particular purpose accomplished through sequential steps and that genres have to be understood with respect to the culture within which they are developed. This section therefore intends to describe the doctoral thesis as a

genre in terms of its “staging organization” (Eggins, 1994, p. 34), social purpose, and the academic cultural context within which it is produced.

A traditional perception of the staging organization, is an extended format of the “IMRD [Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion] structure” of research articles (Swales, 2004). However, some studies have revealed other patterns specific to some disciplines, for examples, theses of “topic-based” structure which “report and discuss their analyses in multiple chapters (ranging from three to seven) with topic-specific titles” (Bunton, 1998, p. 106). The variability of thesis structure highlights the issue of which part of each thesis in my data should be selected as the discussion section, which is addressed in the methodology chapter about corpus compilation (see 4.2.1).

As for the social purpose, Thompson (2001) stated that doctoral theses “provide evidence to examiners of a candidate’s suitability for the award of a doctorate” (p. 4). The doctoral thesis is also acknowledged as a means of gaining membership in the academic discourse community (Carter, 2011; Carter & Blumenstein 2011; Swales, 2004). In order to achieve such a purpose, thesis writers need to demonstrate their ability of understanding and expanding the disciplinary knowledge in a way that meets the expectations of their discourse community (Carter, 2011; Shaw, 1991). This purpose of knowledge construction is often noted as a “common commitment” (Swales, 2004, p. 113) or “generic

performance” (Carter, 2011, p. 730) shared by all academic disciplines. However, it is also recognized that the way that knowledge is presented in theses varies across disciplines (Carter, 2011; Parry, 1998, 2007; Swales, 2004). This could be understood from the perspective of register, which constraints language use by three variables – Field, Tenor, and Mode (also see 1.2.1).

Field relates to a thesis’ area of study. Where the area of study lies within the Becher and Trowler’s (2001) categorizations of soft and hard and pure and applied disciplines will affect the nature of knowledge and the research perspective that thesis writers can adopt, which consequently will affect their language as representation of disciplinary knowledge. In fact, Bazerman’s (1981) study of three journal articles in science, social science, and humanities has already provided empirical evidence about epistemological influences on many aspects of language use, among which particularly relevant to the present study is the way of relating new knowledge claims to existing claims.

Tenor refers to the relationship between the interactants. From the above explanations of social purpose of doctoral theses, there can be discerned a sense of assessment in the doctoral thesis, which will particularly affect the tenor within this communicative event. The tenor of a thesis can be understood as between student and examiner, or as between novice and expert members of disciplines, implying a relationship of unbalanced status and power. This

asymmetrical relationship has been explicitly put forward by Koutsantoni (2006) who stated that “examiners are people of authority in the field, people of power, who set the requirements and define the expectations” (p. 20). A major impact of this distanced relationship on language use is the choice of clause structure or the Mood and Modality particularly concerning interpersonal meaning-making (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

This student-examiner/novice-expert tenor further has implications for the readership of the doctoral thesis and consequently complicates the thesis writer’s task of managing interpersonal meanings. One view is that the typical primary readership of theses and dissertations is the examiners (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007). However, Shaw’s (1991) interview about thesis writing experience with L2 doctoral students reported that the interviewees showed more concern about two types of the “imaginary reader” including “the nonspecialist with background knowledge” and “the subject specialist” than about the actual reader of examiners (p. 193). Many interviewees were unsure whether they should write to inform the nonspecialists or they actually need to convince the specialists of their eligibility for becoming a member of the discourse community. This unclear understanding of the readership has confused these students about what should be presented in a thesis (Shaw, 1991). This problem actually may also make thesis writers struggle with how the content should be

presented in order to appeal the reader, requiring strategic deployment of interpersonal resources which is also the focus of the present study.

The last variable is Mode concerning the immediate situation within which language is produced and the role that language is playing in a certain situation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The Mode of a thesis is written. This mode creates distance between the writer and examiner as it prevents immediate response, and within this mode language plays an essential role as it constitutes the social process and “is used to reflect on experience” (Eggins, 1994, p. 54). The spatial distance created by the written mode would make unequal availability of some information to the writer and reader. The implication of this impact for thesis writers would be that when they make claims about findings in discussion they need to anticipate how much shared knowledge exists between them and the reader. Based on their anticipation, they need to consider the adequate amount of information to put in their texts and the way that they present it so as to convince the reader of claims being made. Moreover, as Hyland (1996) pointed out, “no matter how clearly, convincingly and appropriately reader-centred material may be expressed, the writer’s ability to influence the reader’s response is severely restricted” (p. 436). Although Hyland’s statement can be somewhat discouraging to writers on one hand, on the other hand it further implies how crucial for thesis writers to master the strategic deployment

of interpersonal resources so as to convince their examiners of their knowledge claims and ultimately to obtain the degree of doctorate.

The Viva, as the complement part of thesis, is in a spoken mode where the writer communicates with examiners face to face. Although a thesis and viva constitute the two final stages of the doctoral education (Swales, 2004), the precise role that each plays in the award of a doctoral degree can vary between contexts. In the context researched in the present study, the official website of Graduate School of Warwick University states⁶:

Examiners are asked to prepare an independent report on the thesis before any oral examination or conferral with the other examiner has taken place. After the final decision on the thesis has been reached a joint report is required which sets out the examiners' final recommendation.

On their individual reports, examiners are asked to reach an initial judgement on whether the work submitted meets the criteria for the award of a doctorate. On the basis of this information it would seem reasonable to assume that the thesis in the context of CAL, Warwick University, appears to be described to have a stronger effect on the two examiners' decisions of the award of degree, which seems to highlight the importance of the written thesis.

In addition to the context of situation (register), the third parameter, mentioned at the beginning of this section, of academic cultural context in

⁶ <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/gsp/examiners/general>

which a thesis is actually produced is another source of impact. Lea and Street (1999, 2006) have argued that academic literacies is socially situated within disciplines as well as within specific education settings (e.g. institutions, departments) and is subjected to instructors' expectations shaped by institutional or departmental priorities. This implies that theses produced at CAL, Warwick University, although they share the key rhetorical purpose of establishing original knowledge, can diverge to more or less degree from theses produced at other institutions. All the explanations of the impact of Field, Tenor, and Mode of the doctoral thesis on language use can justify my selection of theses from a single discipline within a single institution.

Up to this point, my review has all been about the doctoral thesis as a whole rather than a particular section. However, the discussion section could be more challenging for writers to cope with. A study of four supervisor-L2 student pairs' perceptions of difficulties in writing the discussion section revealed that these students had less shared understanding of the content and functions of this section than did their supervisors (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006). There was also mismatch between students' and supervisors' perceptions of main difficulties – supervisors reported more discourse-level and genre-related problems such as interpretation of results without sufficient links with literature but students reported more sentence-level problems such as expressing and

connecting ideas (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006). This problem about these students' superficial engagement with literature may be attributed to their incomplete understanding of the functions of the discussion section, as half of the interviewees did not mention this point about making links between results and literature (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006).

This result again highlights the need to make explicit to writers this genre expectation. Bloor and Bloor (1991) suggested that student writers' problem with expressing proper directness and concession could be their insufficient knowledge of academic discourse community and equally could be due to their lack of adequate linguistic resources. In terms of Bloor and Bloor's (1991) suggestion, in addition to awareness-raising of genre expectations, it would be equally important to provide thesis writers with a range of linguistic resources for realizing the function of engaging with literature.

Closely related to the issue of connecting with literature is that of citation practice in academic writing. Two common problems for novice writers are reported to be their reliance more on direct quotations than on paraphrases (Borg, 2000; Campbell, 1990) and their lack of evaluative attitude towards the work being cited (Pecorari, 2003; Petrić, 2007; Thompson, 2005). However, the purpose of using direct quotations or paraphrases seems to override the quantity of them. McCulloch (2012) reported a dissertation of pass grade with many

necessary uses of quotations for a comparison between different definitions and one of fail grade with a number of paraphrases used for merely discussing the argument of the cited work instead of constructing his own. Therefore, the focus on the mechanism of citation in guidebooks may cause the unpleasant result that students still cannot master citation practices simply by following the formatting rules (McCulloch, 2012). It seems more important to make student writers understand the rhetorical functions of citation in academic writing. However, the relationship between what is cited and why it is cited in published research articles is shown to be complex and in relation to different Moves/Steps across different sections of an article and even to the reference requirements of different journals (Kwan & Chan, 2014). The analysis results of Engagement resources in the discussion sections of doctoral theses can be used as pedagogical materials for novice writers to learn the rhetorical functions of citation.

A similar observation that EAP writing textbooks are concerned more about surface features of citation is also made in Thompson and Tribble (2004). In other words, it appears that novice writers would need more pedagogical help than guidebook instruction to be made aware of the complexity involved in referencing to source. Corpus-based materials would be a good complement that can facilitate the writers' exploration of using citations in academic texts from

their own disciplines. As Pecorari (2006) identified, “students’ own observations of the features of published texts in their disciplines” is one way for them to learn to produce disciplinarily acceptable texts (p. 4). The implication for the current study is to provide novice writers with findings about the deployment of interpersonal meanings for the purpose of both citing literature and making their own claims of knowledge in a corpus of doctoral theses and then guide them to explore the findings in order to see how other real writers have managed to take (in)effective positioning towards both literature and their own findings in thesis writing and to reflect what they can do in their own writing.

The possible link identified in McCulloch (2012) between the rhetorical function of citation and the effective integration of source is supported by Petrić (2007), which also suggests the correlation between the use of citation and grades. The lower-rated Masters dissertations by L2 writers showed much fewer uses of “rhetorically more complex citation types requiring analytical skills,” suggesting these writers had some weakness in evaluating knowledge (Petrić, 2007, p. 247). However, both high- and low- rated dissertations used citations mainly for the purpose of attributing information to an external author without “any explicit markers of an additional function” as these writers need to display their familiarity with relevant literature, which appears to distinguish student writing from published writing (Petrić, 2007, p. 247). Based on Petrić’s

(2007) findings and the above explanation about the doctoral thesis as genre, a reasonable assumption is that the doctoral thesis should have both citations for attribution and even more citations for evaluation as it needs to display knowledge but more importantly to transform knowledge.

Another important finding from Petrić (2007) is the varied distribution of citation use across different sections of the Masters dissertations, which shows a greater density of citation for evaluation in literature review in the high-rated set, probably resulting from the communicative purpose of this section. Given this finding, the current data of discussion sections of doctoral theses would also display a prevalent use of citation for evaluation so as to enable the writers to interpret findings and demonstrate their significance in relation to previous work. The use of citation indeed also varies across disciplines, languages, and genres as uncovered by a large body of research (Bloch & Chi, 1995; Hyland, 1999b, Hu & Wang, 2014; Thompson, 2005; Thompson & Tribble, 2001; Samraj, 2008; Soler-Monreal & Gil-Salom, 2011). For example, citation practice in the discipline of Philosophy seems to have a preference for integral-citation that emphasizes the author of the proposition, no matter where in Masters dissertations (Samraj, 2008, see 2.4) or in research articles (Hyland, 1999b). In contrast, texts of these two genres from Biology are found to show a preference for non-integral citation that emphasizes the attributed proposition (Hyland,

1999b; Samraj, 2008). Thompson's (2000, 2005) analysis of Agricultural Botany also observed the tendency to use non-integral citation, which is somewhat comparable to Samraj and Hyland's findings about citation in the wider discipline of Biology. However, across genres, the finding that citation density is higher in research articles from Philosophy than those from Biology (Hyland, 1999b) does not hold up in the Masters dissertations from these two disciplines (Samraj, 2008). Doctoral theses of Agriculture Botany in Thompson (2000, 2005) also found to have lower density of citation than research articles of Biology in Hyland (1999b).

The use of citation can be even more complex as shown in Hu and Wang's (2014) both cross-discipline and cross-language analysis of citation in Applied Linguistics and General Medicine in leading English- and Chinese-journal articles. In terms of citation density, a statistically significant effect of language was found given the evidence of more frequent occurrences of citations in the English texts than in the Chinese ones. In terms of writer stance conveyed via citation, language was found to have a significant effect on the markedly more frequent choice of Acknowledge (a neutral position towards the cited proposition) and Contest ("a negative attitude toward the cited source by direct critique or rejection," Hu & Wang, 2014, p. 17) in the English texts. The implication from these findings is that the use of citation can be constrained by

both disciplinary and language conventions. It could be further assumed that the writers with their past native language writing experience may use citations in conflict with the writing norms in English and that the writers who have less experience in academic writing within a single discipline may use citations in violation of disciplinary norms. Pecorari (2006) explicitly pointed out that “the relationship between a reference to a source and the source itself” is one important “occluded feature” of academic texts which “are not ordinarily visible to the reader” (p. 4). This suggests that novice writers can benefit in learning citations had they are made aware of these invisible features.

2.6 Interpersonal meaning-making in thesis writing guidebooks

Previous sections have reviewed the use of interpersonal language with regard to various factors (L1 rhetorical and disciplinary preferences) and in the genre of doctoral thesis. It has been mentioned (see 2.4) that pedagogical instruction on this issue sometimes was problematic as it may not accurately reflect genuine language use. This provides justification for the review of advice on interpersonal meaning-making in published writing guidebooks.

This section reviews nine books about thesis/dissertation writing in particular and research writing in general. In fact, a search of keywords “thesis writing” and “dissertation writing” in the online catalogue of Warwick Library

returned a greater number of books that covers this subject. However, most of them adopt a global perspective and focus on explaining the step-by-step process of writing a thesis/dissertation from selecting research topic to defending the paper. Only nine of these books provide particularly relevant content about how to actually write up a thesis/dissertation. Despite the small number, the existence of these guidebooks suggests that direct advice is available to students if they are in need of help with writing dissertations or theses, although whether such advice is effective is still in question. A close examination of this set of books focused on the content about writing discussions, which is also the interest of the current research.

An examination first shows that advice on discussion sections takes up quite a small portion in each book, which is consistent with Lee and Casal's (2014) statement that "limited guidance is offered" about the rhetorically complex results and discussion chapter (p. 41). The extreme example is Dunleavy (2003) which does not contain any relevant content about discussing the results. Only Bitchener (2010) has a whole chapter about writing the discussion. Murray (2011) has a single section of a chapter and Cooley and Lewkowicz (2003) has two sections of a chapter that concentrate on discussing data.

The other five books have just one or at most two sections which contain only some information relevant to writing discussion. Moreover, these sections are usually put under chapters focusing on presenting analysis of data or drawing conclusions. For example in Brause (2000), suggestions on interpreting and creating compelling arguments for research findings were given under chapters 12 and 13 of “Analyzing and interpreting your data” and “Presenting your findings: drafting and editing your dissertation.” In Furseth and Everett (2013), advice on discussing findings can also be found in two small sections under the chapter about “structuring analysis.”

From the rhetorical point of view, four books (Biggam, 2008; Bitchener, 2010; Furseth & Everett, 2013; Heppner & Heppner, 2004) state that the key purpose of the discussion chapter is to explain the meaning and significance of thesis writers’ own research results in relation to previous theory or research. Some also suggest ways of achieving this rhetorical purpose. Furseth and Everett (2013) write that, “In the discussion of findings, there should be *references back to the theoretical discussions* in the thesis, which is done by comparing your results with the results found in other studies” (p. 124, original emphasis). Heppner and Heppner (2004) suggest that thesis writers discuss how their findings support, contradict, or extend the previous scholarship.

Further examination of all the books found that four guidebooks caution the writers to be aware of their interpersonal tone while making interpretation or generalization of their research findings. Cooley and Lewkowicz (2003) advise that, “When making claims about your own research and when criticising the research of others you need to use tentative language, that is, you need to hedge what you say” (p. 93). Murray (2011) suggests that, “Hedging – making non-definitive statements about your research – is an acceptable style” at the discussion stage (p. 266). On the other hand, Bitchener (2010) states that there are both occasions when writers can be “quite assertive” or “tentative” in claims about their findings, but it is important for writers to be careful when making either type of claim (p. 192). The two different suggestions about making tentative or assertive claims indicate that there seems no universal preference for an interpersonal tone that writers are better to take when discussing their research findings.

What is crucial, however, is that writers need to support their own assertions, as Murray (2011) and Oliver (2004) recommend: to use connections with previous research findings or writers’ own research data as evidence of support. Specifically, Oliver (2004) suggests that writers “provide evidence for your assertions, based upon quotations and extracts from your data” (p. 144). This appears to reflect the use of the genre-specific option of Justify-from-data

that was identified from the current corpus (see 6.4.9). Murray (2011) proposes that writers can “strengthen your argument by writing about your work and published work in the same sentence” (p. 267), which seems to suggest using the Endorse option in Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal theory to make strong arguments.

All suggestions from these four books are helpful in the sense that they at least provide writers with guidelines for discussing research findings.

However, the suggestions seem to be based more on the authors’ own writing experience and opinions rather than on empirical evidence such as corpus-based analysis of the use of interpersonal language in theses or dissertations. Moreover, many of these books (e.g. Murray, 2001) do not provide a detailed explanation about by what linguistic resources and in what ways writers can use published work to bolster their own assertions. The examination of this aspect of writing in the current research data may reveal useful information for thesis writers, particularly those in the discipline of ELT/Applied Linguistics and hopefully other disciplines in social sciences.

It is admitted that three of the nine books mention the linguistic features of the discussion section (Bitchener, 2010) or introduce some language to use or to avoid (Cooley & Lewkowicz, 2003; Murray, 2011). However, the information provided is quite limited. The table of hedging devices included in

Cooley and Lewkowicz (2003) lists six categories with only one example of each one. These categories revolved around modal verbs, adverbs and adjectives, which is consistent with the tendency noted by some scholars in other academic writing guidebooks (e.g. Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2005, see 2.4). Moreover, some explanation of interpersonal language devices is even contradictory to what other published studies on making arguments in thesis or research writing. For example: Cooley and Lewkowicz (2003) provide *indicate* as the example of hedging verbs. Murray (2011) suggests “*The findings show that...*” as an expression that allows writers to be tentative about assertions and “claim some success without claiming too much” (p. 266). However, in Johns’ (2006) study on the use of different verbs that links research evidence to conclusions in articles from the journal of Nature, the word *show* is found to signal certainty of the conclusion being drawn from evidence and *indicate* seems to stand between *suggest* and *demonstrate* on the continuum of certainty and “incorporates a measure of deliberate vagueness” (p. 61). Although Johns (2006) analyzed a different type of genre, the need for writers to make reasonable and convincing claims in the published research articles is also required in theses/dissertations. The different view that some thesis writing guidebooks and published research hold on the case of *show* and *indicate* suggests a further look at the way that writers argue for their propositions by

use of this and other functionally similar verbs (e.g. *suggest*, *demonstrate*, and *found* as in Johns, 2006, see 8.2).

The contradiction between this guidebook's and empirical research's opinion on the semantic association of *show* also reflects what corpus-based analysis often discover about mismatches between naturally-occurring language uses and examples in teaching materials (Flowerdew, 1993; Römer, 2009). Therefore, it becomes crucial to make writers aware of the trap of assuming that certain lexical items have inherent interpersonal meanings. An analysis of interpersonal language in a specialized corpus of theses by the functional approach of Appraisal theory can generate results about its linguistic realizations and their frequently associated interpersonal function in this genre. These corpus-based results can better help writers, particularly who are from the ELT/Applied Linguistics discipline, understand the lexico-grammar of interpersonal language. These results can also inform adjustments to advice on using interpersonal language in writing guidebooks, which is often known as one major pedagogical application of corpus-based language research (Gavioli & Aston, 2001; Römer, 2009). The next section will review in detail of how corpus-based approach can benefit language teaching and learning.

2.7 Corpus-based approach to language teaching and learning

The relationship between corpus linguistics (CL) and language teaching (LT) is dynamic and interactive in that “resources, methods, and insights” gained from CL benefit LT and meanwhile LT provides “need-driven impulses” for CL research (Römer, 2009, p. 113). Pedagogical corpora applications can be both direct and indirect (Römer, 2009; Leech, 1997). Indirect applications refer to using corpus-based evidence to inform material writers when they are designing teaching syllabi and reference works (e.g. dictionaries and grammar books). For example, corpus-based analysis can reveal language items and structures of high frequency of occurrence in real communications, which can help with decisions about what to include in teaching materials (Gavioli & Aston, 2001; Römer, 2009). Corpus-based analysis also can reveal mismatches between naturally-occurring language uses and those presented as examples in teaching materials and therefore can help with material adjustments (Römer, 2009). Direct applications, also broadly known as data-driven learning (DDL), refer to accessing corpora directly by learners or less directly and controlled by teachers in order to explore patterns of language use (Römer, 2009). Both direct and indirect pedagogical applications can make use of general corpora and specialized corpora.

A growing number of studies have presented the application of corpora in the EAP classroom (Cargill & Adams, 2005; Cobbs, 1999; Gaskell & Cobb, 2004; Hong, 2010; Horst, Cobb & Nicolae, 2005; Johns, 1994; Lee & Swales, 2006; Thurstun & Candlin, 1998; Yoon, 2008) and in ESP and other specialized learning context (Farr, 2008; Hafner & Candlin, 2007; Weber, 2001). Thurstun and Candlin (1998) designed for university students corpus-based self-learning of “the most important, frequent and significant items of the vocabulary of academic English” (p. 267). This experiment focused on a restricted set of vocabulary grouped in terms of their main rhetorical functions (e.g. reporting other research and expressing opinions etc.), which were selected according to their frequency of use in the University Word List cited in Nation (1990), the Microconcord Corpus of Academic Texts and the authors’ own perceptions. Students were guided to perform a chain of activities which includes examining the key word and surrounding words in concordances, understanding the use of the key word in context, and practicing using that word in their own writing. The intensive exposure to the selected vocabulary through concordance-based activities helped students to “develop insights into the collocations and grammatical structures with which the key words are associated” (Thurstun & Candlin, 1998, p. 271).

In Horst, Cobb and Nicolae's (2005) vocabulary course, university ESL students learned academic vocabulary through a series of activities supplied by an online database, which includes reading articles of general and special academic topics, selecting, entering and sharing the words they would study, using concordancing to guess word meaning from multiple sentence contexts and to review learned words, and doing cloze quizzes. These activities were found to engage students in deeper and inductive learning of vocabulary and provide students more opportunities to learn words in contexts of concordance output.

Yoon (2008) reported an academic writing course for graduate ESL students in which the students were required to consult the Collins COBUILD Corpus in order to solve their sentence-level writing problems on their own and to send their search results to the instructor every week. The instructor combined these results and presented them to all students so the whole class could benefit. These students were observed to become "more independent writers" in the process of hands-on corpus search for solutions to language problems, which "promoted their perceptions of lexico-grammar and language awareness" (Yoon, 2008, p. 31).

Gaskell and Cobb (2004) provided intermediate ESL learners with feedback to their typical grammar errors in writing in the form of URL-link that directs to concordance search results of correct examples of the targeted

grammatical structure. The students were required to correct their errors and complete “error analysis forms which would disclose whether a concordance had been consulted and whether its pattern had been applied correctly” (Gaskell & Cobb, 2004, p.311). The end-of-course survey indicated that about half of the participants specifically expressed the usefulness of concordance work to their learning of grammar.

In contrast to the above studies that used general corpora, Lee and Swales (2006) designed a writing course for doctoral students that focused on using specialized corpora. These students first learned to apply concordance tools to analyzing and comparing language use and patterns in three specialized corpora of academic writing and speaking (Hyland’s Research Article Corpus, MICASE, Academic texts from the British Nation Corpus, p. 61). They were then required to compile two specialized corpora of their own writing and published research articles in their field and to present cross-corpora observations about the lexico-grammar and discourse structures of their disciplinary genres. Feedback from the participants suggested that the corpus-based exploitation enhanced their awareness and knowledge about disciplinary writing.

In another Australian EAP context, postgraduates from Applied Linguistics and Agricultural science were introduced to learn discipline-specific English and writing using the concordance software ConcApp in the corpus of

published journal articles across disciplines compiled by the researchers (Cargill and Adams, 2005). The students were also encouraged after the sessions to construct their own discipline-specific corpus and consult it by ConcApp in order to help with their research writing. The end-of-session evaluation from the Agricultural group indicated their positive attitude towards using this tool and its potential benefits to developing their writing. However, an eight-month later follow-up survey suggests that this group virtually had not completed the further tasks as intended by the researchers, which could be resulted from the time and effort of building a specialized corpus (Cargill & Adams, 2005). This result would imply the need of constructing more specialized corpora and making them available to students so that they can conduct concordancing activities for learning disciplinary writing in these corpora. The specialized corpus built in the current study would be such an example which consists of “successful” doctoral theses, and I hope to make accessible to students in future.

Other studies conducted comparative experiments of corpus-based and traditional language instruction. Hong (2010) found that both methodologies contributed to develop advanced Korean EFL learners’ grammatical knowledge of English determiners but that corpus-based exercises also helped learners build their cognitive ability “to obtain what they need to know using process-based corpus data” (p. 77). Çelik (2011) discovered that the group of Turkish EFL

students who practiced corpus-based exercises to learn the targeted academic words and prepositional phrases performed better in “a retention test three weeks after the post test administration” than did the group who learned through an online dictionary (p. 278). Similar to the case of Çelik (2011), Kaur and Hegelheimer (2005) found the use of concordancing and together with an online dictionary resulted in intermediate ESL undergraduates’ better acquisition of academic words and ability to integrate these words into the writing task. This result corroborates Cobb’s (1999) finding that Arabic L2 students were more capable of transferring the acquired “definitional knowledge” of words to fitting blanks in two new texts of cloze passages when they involved in “constructing definitions for themselves using an adapted version of the computational tools of lexicographers” (p. 15).

A reflection of all studies reviewed above leads to the summary that: 1) corpus-based materials and concordancing activities are attested to be helpful to learn academic vocabulary and writing; 2) the process of searching language items and structures and analyzing them in concordance output can enable students to become more autonomous learners and even learners-as-researchers (e.g. Cargill & Adams, 2005; Lee & Swales, 2006); 3) the learning through concordance output consisting of examples of searched items in multiple contexts seems to foster students’ ability of using these items in their own

writing context (e.g. Cobbs, 1999; Kaur & Hegelheimer, 2005). As one of the pioneers of the DDL approach Johns (1994) stated, “the concordance printout offers a unique resource for the stimulation of inductive learning strategies – in particular the strategies of perceiving similarities and differences and of hypothesis formulations and testing” (p. 297).

This self-exploratory process not only can raise students’ awareness of what to learn but also enable them to figure out how to learn in the context of corpus. Although there is a tendency to see the inductive and bottom-up learning as incompatible with the top-down genre approach to EAP, Weber (2001) demonstrated a project in which non-native law students conducted genre-analysis of the macrostructure of legal essays in a small corpus and then used concordances to explore lexical items that seem to be associated with the structures identified. This combining approach was found to help the students produce acceptable legal essays “both from a linguistic and a legal point of view” (p. 19). Similarly in her doctoral project, Chang (2010) designed a stance corpus that incorporates her analysis of the results of the co-articulations of Engagement options (and their linguistic realizations) for achieving different Moves in introduction of research articles from social science and guided seven L1 Chinese postgraduates to learn stance-taking in research writing. Her findings showed that the writers’ awareness of the rhetorical structure of introduction and the

deployment of interpersonal stance was enhanced by the corpus-based learning (Chang, 2010).

This potential of awareness-raising can be seen as another nexus between corpus approach and genre approach to academic writing. While a corpus approach can raise the writers' awareness of more lexical and textual features by allowing them to analyze concordances as shown by the above reviewed studies, a genre approach can reveal the reasons behind certain linguistic and rhetorical choices. As Hyland (2003) maintained, the core of a genre approach is to "offer writers an explicit understanding of how texts in target genres are structured and why they are written in the ways they are" (p. 26). The analytical process of the rationale for particular language choices enables writers not only to clarify the reasons but also to acquire the metalanguage of talking and thinking about language (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 1999; Hyland, 2003). The acquisition of metalanguage through a genre approach in fact, as Hyland (2003) argued, serves as "a necessary basis for critical engagement with cultural and textual practice" (p. 25). Jacob, Leech, and Holton (1995) showed the initiation of undergraduate ESL science students into the discussion sections of research reports by guiding them to examine the linguistic and rhetorical conventions of authentic text samples and the criteria for writing discussion sections. The students in turn can use such knowledge to write their own discussion and to

analyze and evaluate other discussion texts. Particularly, Abbuhah's (2012) experimental investigation of the effect of explicit and awareness-raising instruction on the use of self-referential pronouns for authorial presence in argumentative essays showed that the instructed group used statistically significant more of the targeted devices in two essays and the quiz than did the non-instructed group, which runs somewhat counter to Freedman's (1993) hypothesis that explicit instruction on genre knowledge may not be necessary or may even be harmful. Chang and Schleppegrell's (2011) study also indicated that "Explicit discussion of expansive and contractive [Appraisal] options for achieving key moves in introducing their research focuses novice L2 research writers on language in ways that help them expand their linguistic resources" (p. 148).

The present study, although it focuses on exploring interpersonal meaning-making in discussion sections of the doctoral theses, it also aims at sharing those corpus-based results with novice writers. It includes a small-scale pedagogical trial that engages Masters students in some exploratory tasks designed according to the corpus-generated findings so as to sharpen their awareness of linguistic features and rhetorical purposes of making interpersonal meanings in thesis/dissertation writing.

Chapter 3 Theoretical framework

3.1 Description of Appraisal theory

As introduced in 1.2.1, Appraisal theory evolved within SFL which recognizes language as a meaning-making resource simultaneously construing ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings sensitive to its context of use (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Appraisal theory deals particularly with interpersonal meanings from the functional perspective by exploring attitudinal meanings (Attitude, e.g. *a good evidence*, L, 2007: 197), the projection of authorial voice with respect to alternative voices and the imagined reader (Engagement, e.g. *The challenges for whole-class teaching may encourage the teacher...*, C, 2001: 273), and the adjustment of the strength of attitudinal meanings and author-reader alignment (Graduation, e.g. *extremely important...*, G, 2008: 252). Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation are the three main categories of Appraisal which work together to create an interpersonal stance. It is very important to recognize that these are semantic categories realized by a diverse array of lexico-grammatical structures. The notion of “realized by” or “recoding” is critical to SFL, which sees language as a “stratified” system operating on two content levels of discourse semantics and lexico-grammar, and one expression level of phonology and graphology (Martin & White, 2005, p. 8). The relationship between every two adjacent strata is that the more abstract one

is realized by the more concrete one, and thus the meaning of the more abstract level is a recoding of patterns of the more concrete structures. The figure below shows the stratification of language, which represents the realization of language at three level of abstraction:

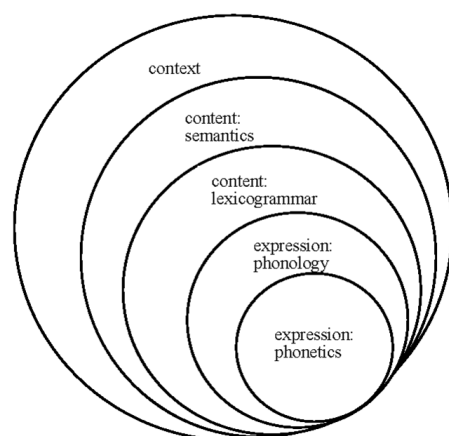


Figure 3.1 *Stratification from Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 25)*

This discourse semantics modeling of interpersonal meanings enables Appraisal theory to encompass as diverse a range of linguistic resources as possible, which were often studied by other traditions of interpersonal language in isolation as viewed in 2.3 and 2.4. Linguistic realizations of each system of Appraisal theory can transcend various lexico-grammatical structures, ranging from the congruent forms (modal verbs/adverbs) to the non-congruent ones (nominalization/Mental Process). For example, Martin and White (2005) quoted two realizations which can be seen as alternatives: *Perhaps his playing style might be different* and *I suspect his playing style is different* (p. 11). Interpretation of these formulations within the Appraisal framework is not by

reference to the truthfulness of the propositional content. Instead, they are interpreted from a “dialogic” perspective which views any communicative act as a process of “interaction between the various participants who enact the communication” (White, 2001b, p. 3). Therefore, the three underlined items do not suggest the author’s lack of commitment to or uncertainty about the truth-value of the proposition being advanced but suggest the current proposition as contentious in the ongoing communication and acknowledge potentially different opinions. The Appraisal framework is in fact such a complex and exhaustive model that each of its sub-systems has its own delicate sub-categories, but a sketchy representation can be displayed as in Figure 3.2.

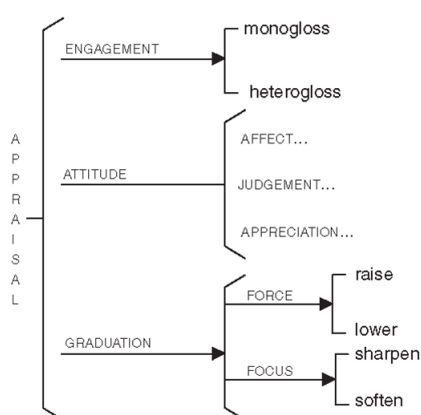


Figure 3.2 *Appraisal Framework from Martin and White (2005: 38)*

Following the SFL conventions, this diagram represents the system network of Appraisal theory with the square brackets indicating either/or choices and the curly brackets indicating both/and choices. Eggins (1994) explained that:

each system in a system network represents a point at which a choice has to be made. The first choice that has to be made (from the system at the

most left-hand side of the system network) is called the **least delicate** choice. (...) As the network extends to the right, we say we are moving in **delicacy**, until the final system (i.e. that at the extreme right-hand side of the network) is called the most delicate system... (p. 208, original emphasis)

For example, the sub-system of Heterogloss can be diagrammatically represented as:

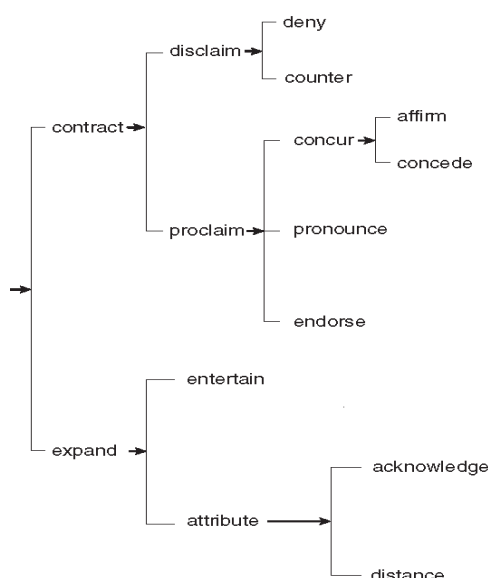


Figure 3.3 *Model of Heterogloss adapted from Martin and White (2005: 134)*

According to Eggins' (1994) explanation, the Affirm category should be read as the most delicate choice in the less delicate system of Concur, which is within the least delicate level of Proclaim. These degrees of delicacy make it possible for the analyses of data in more general or more delicate levels in terms of particular research purposes (Hood, 2004). The application of Appraisal theory to the present research therefore will result in a comprehensive analysis of semantic options for interpersonal language and their corresponding

lexico-grammatical realizations in discussion sections of doctoral theses. It should also be noted that the application of Appraisal theory to this particular genre may lead to an expansion of the current Appraisal framework. As one of the originators of the framework White (2001a) has pointed out: “each [discourse] domain will typically operate with at least some unique semantic features” (p. 1).

Much fuller descriptions of the three main categories in the Appraisal framework and their sub-categories as well as my decisions to which category and level of delicacy of Appraisal model should be the focus of this study are presented in Chapter 5 which is concerned with pilot coding.

3.2 Appraisal-based research on interpersonal meaning-making

Despite the fact that Appraisal theory is still developing, it has been extensively applied to studying interpersonal meaning in a range of discourse domains: to name a few, online book reviews (Mora, 2011), consumer-generated reviews (Taboada & Carretero, 2012), journalistic commentaries/editorials (White, 2003, 2012), classroom discourse (Lin, 2008), and academic discourse (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011; Chatterjee, 2008; Coffin, 2002, 2009; Hood, 2004, 2005, 2006; Koutsantoni, 2004; Liu & Thompson, 2009; Swain, 2010;

Tang, 2009; Wu, 2007), which is of particular relevance to the current research and is reviewed in detail.

Studies on interpersonal language in academic discourse by means of Appraisal theory have different focuses on the three sub-systems of its framework (Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation) and have different dimensions of comparison (novice and experienced writers, high- and low- rated L2 English writing, English and native language writing by L2 English speakers). Focusing on Attitude and Graduation, Hood (2005) discovered that published writers and Hong Kong student writers demonstrated different preferences for Attitude options for constructing evaluative stance in introduction sections of published articles and undergraduate dissertations. Student writers' reliance on Judgment (evaluation of people and their behavior) and Affect (expression of emotions) in evaluating research content constructed their texts as more personal and subjective than the published texts with dominant use of Appreciation (evaluation of things or phenomena). Interestingly, Liu and Thompson (2009), however, found more items of Judgment and Appreciation than Affect in one English and one Chinese argumentative essay of the same topic written by one L1 Chinese undergraduate student. All these attitudinal values in both texts were encoded more in a positive and explicit way instead of negative and implicit way. The least amount of Affect resources in both English and Chinese essays made

these texts less subjective and personal (Liu & Thompson, 2009), which contrasts with Hood's (2005) finding about undergraduate dissertations by Hong Kong students.

Liu and Thompson (2009) further identified a reverse distribution of Appreciation and Judgment in the English and Chinese texts. Less Judgment items was found in the Chinese text, and as the authors suggested this means "the avoidance of direct ethical and moral evaluations," which seems to reflect the emphasis on "the use of language and rhetoric to achieve social harmony" in Chinese rhetoric (Liu & Thompson, 2009, p. 7). On the other hand, more Judgment items was used in the English text, which corresponds to Hood's (2005) finding about this option in her data of student texts but contrasts with experienced writers' preference for Appreciation as way of evaluating research.

From the perspective of the construal of interpersonal positioning beyond clauses, Hood (2005) also noticed three main problems for student writers in managing the prosody of Attitude across a phase of text, namely, 1) vague evaluative coding; 2) shift in evaluative attitude without signaling; 3) unclear phase boundaries causing difficulty interpreting authorial attitude. Hood (2005) therefore suggested an urgent need to inform student writers of how to effectively construct a dynamic and coherent interpersonal positioning in writing through the co-articulation of Attitude and other Appraisal options. As pointed

out at the end of section 2.4, the exploration of construction of interpersonal meanings in authorial arguments across text spans is also the particular concern in the present study but with a focus on the Engagement sub-system.

Swain's (2010) analysis for Attitude and Engagement of high- and low-score discussion essays by L2 English undergraduates suggested that Attitude resources may be a less important differentiating factor between successful and less successful essays in light of more differences in using Engagement identified between the two sets of data. The high-score set contained a greater amount and wider range of Engagement resources, and a more balanced use between expansive and contractive options (two broad sub-categories of Engagement which allows more and less dialogic space for the negotiation of alternative views, respectively, see 5.2.2). Swain (2010) therefore suggested "the need to familiarise novice writers with the full range of engagement options which are available to them" (p. 311), which also makes the rationale for the particular attention on Engagement in the current study.

Along similar lines, Wu (2007) compared high- and low-rated argumentative essays by Singapore undergraduate students and closely examined the deployment of Engagement. Overall, those high-rated texts were found to have a more interpersonal tone as indicated by more prevalent use of expansive Engagement than of contractive Engagement, which however was

frequently used in low-rated texts making writers' arguments more assertive and less aware of potential alternations. These findings are informative in the way that they can show student writers that expansive interpersonal stance generally seems to be more preferred in argumentative essays, but they did not show students in which situations the two types of stance should be taken. What also needs to be borne in mind is that in the part-genre of discussion sections, which is different from the texts in Wu (2007), contractive stance may be necessary as well. For example, when writers present new findings that are at odds with previous findings, a contractive Engagement option would be more useful in that it is argued that dialogic contraction particularly which realized by making alignment with other published research (Endorse) or reference to the author's own research data (Justify-from-data) can reduce the possibility of counter-argument (see 8.1.1).

The striking difference reported in Wu (2007) concerns the deployment of various sub-categories of Engagement for the purpose of supporting authorial arguments. Writers of low-rated essays seemed to rely on Proclaim: Pronounce (a category which presents high authorial emphasis on a proposition, see descriptions in 5.2.2.3 & 6.4.5) to insist their propositions but were less aware of the options of Disclaim: Counter/Deny (two categories which present the authorial voice as rejecting some contrary propositions, see descriptions in

5.2.2.2 & 6.4.4). However, these two categories were often used in high-rated essays as a strategy to develop authorial position by introducing alternatives but for rejecting them. Additionally, writers of lower-rated essays made less use of Proclaim: Endorse (a category which presents an attributed proposition as valid and presents the authorial voice as aligning with that attributed voice, see descriptions in 5.2.2.3 & 6.4.6) which resulted in a sense of unwarranted arguments. Brooke (2014) also observed that higher-rated undergraduate EFL writers more successfully created argumentation of contrastive positions by using significantly more interpersonal resources for attribution and authorial endorsement or disendorsement.

Findings in both Wu (2007) and Brooke (2014) seemed to indicate a positive correlation between the use of Engagement options and the appropriate interpersonal positioning achieved, and thus the more persuasive arguments constructed. However, as shown in Wu's (2007) study, some Engagement options and the way of using one option in conjunction with another to reinforce authorial arguments may not be fully grasped by all student writers, which again highlights the need of raising students' awareness about these issues.

Chang and Schleppegrell (2011) turned their focus on the use of Engagement in introductions to research articles in Education in relation to the different rhetorical purposes of Swales' (1990) Moves. They identified useful

patterns deployed for the Moves of “establishing a territory” and “establishing a niche” in the introductions. For example, the expansive option of Attribute (a category which presents a proposition as being attributed to an external voice) was often used to introduce studies already done which were then pointed out to have limitations by the contractive option Disclaim, alternatively followed by Proclaim asserting a different viewpoint. The co-articulation of these Engagement resources helped to set up research background and create space for writers’ own research. A number of different patterns were identified in Chang and Schlepppegrell (2011) which clearly showed how interpersonal meanings are realized and reinforced through the co-articulation of Engagement resources. It can be seen that Chang and Schlepppegrell’s (2011) analysis focus was on interpersonal meanings at the level of discourse semantic, or in their own explanation “from clause to clause and paragraph to paragraph” (p. 148). The patterns of co-articulations of Engagement uncovered in their study presented an accumulative construction of authorial positioning, which can be pedagogically helpful to student writers who may experience difficulty managing dynamic construal of authorial stance (e.g. Hood, 2004, 2005, 2006).

The potential of research on interpersonal language drawing upon Appraisal theory for writing pedagogy is further supported by Chatterjee (2008), who argued that Appraisal taxonomy “can be used to serve the pedagogic

objective of raising awareness about the Interpersonal aspects of using the words of others” (p. 3). As shown by Chatterjee’s (2008) analysis of two doctoral theses, strategic deployment of Engagement resources can realize effective interaction with source texts through which writers indicate their positioning and negotiate their own voice with others in their discourse community. However, this interpersonal task is often linguistically and cognitively challenging to novice research writers such as doctoral students (Chatterjee, 2008; Thompson, 2005). This suggests a need to further explore the issue of interpersonal meaning-making in academic writing and perhaps particularly in discussion sections of doctoral theses where writers need to negotiate their knowledge claims against the backdrop of previous literature.

Chapter 4 Methodology

It has been mentioned in 2.6 and 2.7 that a corpus approach to studying language can reveal some uses or patterns of language that are misrepresented or underrepresented in non-corpus based language descriptions or in teaching materials. The examination of a set of thesis/dissertation writing guidebooks (see 2.6) also revealed the lack of consensus on some interpersonal language items which are important for the creation of persuasive claims. Therefore, the current study aims at taking the corpus approach to investigating what interpersonal language that real thesis writers have taken and how they have made use of it to argue for their research findings in relation to the literature that they reviewed. The sections below first explain the decision to use a specialized corpus (4.1), and then set out some general principles for corpus design and the principles underlying the creation of the specialized corpus in this study as well as the process of data cleaning (4.2), and lastly explains the reasons for annotating the corpus and conducting both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the current data (4.3).

4.1 Using a specialized corpus

Corpus-based language studies, as the name suggests, investigate language use in a corpus defined as “a large, principled collection of naturally-occurring texts that is stored in electronic form (accessible on

computer)” (Conrad, 2002, p. 76). While earlier corpus-based language research in the 1980s often used general corpora (e.g. Brown corpus) for the aim of providing an overall description of a particular language or language variety, there is now a growing body of research that utilizes specialized corpora for the aim of analyzing language use in specific contexts such as academic and professional situations (Connor & Upton, 2004). For this purpose, specialized corpora often cover text types from a particular domain or genre in order to maximally represent its particular language use or as Hunston (2002) explained, “Researchers often collect their own specialised corpora to reflect the kind of language they want to investigate” (p. 14). The status of “analyst-cum-compiler” is considered as one advantage of language studies based on specialized corpora in that while compiling a corpus the analyst becomes familiar with the social-cultural context of the selected texts and thus can act as “a kind of mediating ethnographic specialist informant to shed light on the corpus data” (Flowerdew, 2004, p. 16).

Another important advantage of specialized corpora is their “internal composition” (Flowerdew, 2004, p. 15). Specialized corpora are often composed of full texts and are of a manageable size. These consequently allow for the annotation of extra-linguistic data and discourse-level structures, which in turn facilitates more qualitative and interpretive language analysis that

complements the more quantitative-based analysis (Flowerdew, 2004). This value of working with specialized corpora can counter one criticism about corpus-based research that the analytical methods of concordancing and keyword-searching limit the study to “a somewhat atomized, bottom-up type of investigation of the corpus data” (Flowerdew, 2005, p. 324). Flowerdew (2005) argued that the application of discourse-tags (e.g. tagging of Move structures) to specialized corpora has enabled the examination of lexico-grammatical features associated with each Move and made the interpretation of analysis go beyond being based only on concordance lines.

Moreover, the use of ethnographic methods (e.g. interviews with specialized informants about the use of particular features in a genre) can help the interpretation of corpora data (Flowerdew, 2004). Insights from systemic functional linguistic, genre analysis, and discourse analysis also have been increasingly drawn upon as theoretical ground underpinning corpus analysis (Flowerdew, 1998), which can to a great extent solve what Grabe and Kaplan (1996) pointed out as the dilemma of “lack of a theoretical foundation for the interpretation of the results prior to the analysis” faced by most corpus research (p. 46).

Overall, a specialized corpus is better suited for studying language structures and patterns where a researcher is interested in a special type of

discourse. The relatively small size of a specialized corpus, which usually comprises full texts, enables more “qualitative, contextually-informed analyses” at the discourse level (Flowerdew, 2004, p. 18). Based on the premise that a word’s likely primings are constrained by domain or genre, Hoey (2007) stressed that a general corpus may be less revealing than a specialized corpus about some primings associated with particular genres or domains. Tribble (2002) also maintained that “larger corpora appear to have less relevance to EAP writing instruction and other areas of ELT” due to the lack of focused data that are of direct help with specific learning purposes (p. 132). The current study therefore used a specialized corpus made up of discussion sections of doctoral theses and drew on Appraisal theory as the theoretical basis for investigating interpersonal language in it.

4.2 Developing a specialized corpus

4.2.1 Underlying principles

A wide literature about corpus linguistics (e.g. Biber, 1993; McEnery, Tono & Xiao, 2006; McEnery & Wilson, 2001) has discussed representativeness, balance, and sampling as three related key qualities that need to be considered for corpus design. Representativeness is a distinctive feature of a corpus that is dependent to a great extent on balance (“the range of genres included in a corpus”) and sampling (“how the text chunks for each

genre are selected”) (McEnery, Tono & Xiao, 2006, p. 13). Ultimately, all the three qualities are defined by research questions that a corpus is used to address (McEnery, Tono & Xiao, 2006).

Biber (1993), from the perspective of how representativeness can be achieved, defined this feature as “the extent to which a sample includes the full range of variability in population” and accordingly a prior conception of the target population is critical (p. 243). If a corpus (i.e. a general corpus) is intended to represent a language as a whole, it is understandable that the corpus should cover, proportionally, as many genres and texts from each genre as it can select from this language. A specialized corpus thus should include as many texts from the genre that is intended to be represented as possible given constraints on research time, which is the case of the present corpus. Based on the research questions (see 1.4), this study aims at building a corpus that is supposed to represent the discussion sections of doctoral theses in the discipline of ELT/Applied Linguistics at one institution only (for reasons see 1.1 & 2.4). The issue of balance therefore seems to be less relevant than that of sampling to this study.

One consideration of sampling in this case is which part of thesis should be selected as the discussion section and another is the number of texts that should be selected. It has been mentioned that not all doctoral theses follow the

traditional IMRD structure of research articles (see 2.5), which suggests that some theses may not have a separate chapter titled Discussion but integrate discussions into results/analyses (see 2.5). Therefore, I first looked into the Warwick Research Archive Portal (WRAP⁷) in order to collect all doctoral theses in the discipline of ELT/Applied Linguistics. Then, the basic principle for selecting a thesis as a candidate for analysis is whether it has a separate chapter of discussion. For those where results and discussion were integrated into one or more chapters, I examined the sub-headings in that chapter and read the relevant content so as to determine if there is a clear boundary between the two stages. If there is, then the thesis is selected. For example, one thesis L (2007) has two chapters titled as “Data analysis and discussion (I)” and “Data analysis and discussion (II),” which respectively has a section of “Further Discussion” (see Appendix). A qualitative reading of both sections suggests that its primary communicative purpose was to interpret the results of research, and therefore the two sections were taken together as a whole and included in this corpus as one text sample. If no such clear boundary can be identified in a thesis where results and discussion were integrated, then that thesis is excluded. My sampling is in similar manner to Abdollahzaden (2011) which, with the aim

⁷ WRAP (<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk>) is a free online repository of PhD theses available for research purposes with authors’ permission and thus texts collected from WRAP are in public domains.

to investigate the employment of metadiscourse in conclusions of research articles in Applied Linguistics, selected those with separate conclusion sections in order to achieve more consistency. Moreover, as the current study involves a comparison of interpersonal language used by L1 Chinese and L1 English writers, I needed to work from the sub-corpus with the smaller number of theses, which is the number of theses written by L1 Chinese students that I had access to at the time of data collection (December 2011). The above sampling decisions finally lead to a seemingly small corpus in terms of the number of texts (6 texts by L1 Chinese writers and 6 by L1 English writers). However, in terms of the potential to reveal Appraisal items, it can be shown that the size of this specialized corpus is adequate (see 4.2.1.3).

In addition to the general principles for corpus design as explained above, the next section explains the parameters for building a specialized corpus (Flowerdew, 2004) which guided the creation of the current corpus.

4.2.1.1 Purpose

Flowerdew (2004) emphasized the purpose for building a specialized corpus as a determining parameter that to a large extent guides other points that need to be taken into account. Two main purposes of the present research are 1) to investigate the patterns of deployment of Appraisal resources in discussion sections of doctoral theses and the rhetorical consequences that different patterns

achieved in arguing for the authors' own findings in relation to previous literature and 2) to explore any similarities and/or differences between the L1 Chinese and L1 English writers' use of Appraisal options. The research purposes therefore require a corpus that consists of texts in this target genre produced by writers of both L1 backgrounds.

4.2.1.2 Contextualization

Flowerdew (2004) pointed out three aspects of contextualization for consideration: "setting, participants, and communicative purpose" (p. 21). Setting is mainly concerned with physical contexts where discourse was produced, which in this case is CAL, Warwick University. The decision to focus on one single institution was informed by previous research which has shown the impact of local context on the use of interpersonal language in particular (e.g. Li & Wharton, 2012) and on academic writing in general (e.g. Casanave, 1995; Lea & Street, 1999, 2000) (see 2.4). Participants of doctoral theses involve the writer and the reader including the actual reader of supervisor and examiners and the potential reader of members of the writer's discourse community (see 2.5). As explained in 2.5, the communicative purpose of convincing thesis examiners of the writer's research findings for the award of a doctorate requires the deployment of interpersonal language consistent with disciplinary norms, which also justifies the selection of doctoral theses as research data in this study.

4.2.1.3 Size

The current corpus has 12 texts and a total number of 118,971 words, in which the shortest text has 4,849 words, the longest 13,620, and the average 9,914. The number of texts may appear to be small at first sight; however, many studies on Appraisal in fact also worked with relatively small specialized corpora. For instance, Chang (2010) analyzed 15 texts with the range of length from 350 to 550 words, and Hood (2004) examined 10 texts with the range of length from 650 to 1200 words. This is because annotations of such functional features have to be conducted manually with sensitive considerations of co-text, which requires a large amount of time and therefore constrains the size of corpus. As McEnery, Xiao, and Tono (2006) noted, “corpora that need extensive manual annotation...are necessarily small” (p. 72).

Despite this practical constraint, the present corpus of 12 texts has yielded a total of 7059 occurrences of Appraisal items, with the highest number in one text of 908, the lowest 257, and the average 588. Based on the corpus size (118,971 words), it can be seen that there is one occurrence of Appraisal item every 16.9 words. As a point of comparison, Hyland’s (2004, 2010) corpus of 240 doctoral and masters dissertations totalling 4 million words generated one metadiscourse item every 21 words. Given the large difference between the size of this corpus and that of Hyland’s (about 34 times larger), the roughly equal

frequency of occurrence of interpersonal items seems to be a good indication that this feature is frequent in this genre and therefore even a smaller corpus can generate adequate items for analysis.

McEnery and Wilson (2001) and McEnery, Xiao, and Tono (2006) also recommended “the degree of closure” as a means of measuring the sufficiency of the size of a specialized corpus. According to them, a corpus first needs to be divided into segments of equal size, and then the closure/saturation is measured if “each addition of a new segment yields approximately the same number of new lexical items as the previous segment” (p. 16). This approach was adopted in the current study, however, in a reversed way by steadily reducing the corpus size by a small percentage and calculating whether the number of instances of coded Appraisal items decreased by a similar proportion.

Ideally, it is better to reduce the corpus size by around 5% each time on the basis of a random selection of text. However, this was not possible in reality since the UAM CorpusTool does not include a function for the random selection of data, and to attempt this via any other software would mean that annotation of data in the UAM CorpusTool would be lost. A random selection of words might also have cut across a coding of Appraisal. Given those constraints, the best practice would be taking out one text at a time. One procedure started from taking out the smallest text in the whole corpus and continued taking out the second smallest one, and so

forth. The second procedure started from taking out the smallest text in the whole corpus (which is in the L₁C sub-corpus), but then taking out the smallest one in the L₁E sub-corpus, and followed such sequence by taking out the rest of texts. These two ways of reducing corpus size enabled a check of sufficiency of the whole corpus as well as each sub-corpus (see Appendix for details).

The procedure showed that roughly a 5% reduction of the corpus size resulted in roughly a 5% decrease of the instances of Appraisal items (see Appendix). This decrease in proportion remained about the same for each reduction of the corpus size until it was reduced by about 90%, which suggests that the corpus size is sufficient at least in terms of revealing Appraisal features. As both Biber (2006) and Flowerdew (2004) emphasized, the number of occurrences of target linguistic items that a specialized corpus can generate is often the best determinant of the adequacy of the size of this corpus.

4.2.1.4 Genre/ type of text/ subject matter

All texts in this corpus are discussion sections of doctoral theses, which is within the broad domain of academic genres. As elaborated in 2.5, a thesis often has the dual communicative purpose of constructing new knowledge and persuading examiners of the value of research findings, which therefore can be seen as both expert writing and assessed student writing. The nature of being assessed will impose pressure on writers who need to deploy interpersonal

language for the creation of appealing arguments particularly in discussion sections. This reliance on interpersonal language also determines the selection of discussion sections of doctoral theses for investigation, as Swales (2004) pointed out that probably “the key differentiating aspect of dissertation writing is a much greater use of metadiscourse” (p. 188).

The subject matter of texts selected for this research concerns issues in the fields of ELT/Applied Linguistics (e.g. learner autonomy, communicative language teaching, and academic writing etc.). This subject matter was chosen because of its importance in contemporary China (see 1.1) and my familiarity with it through my Masters and doctoral study and my reading of related academic papers. Researchers’ intimate knowledge about the subject matter of data would be their advantage in coding and analyzing the data (Hu & Cao, 2011).

It needs to be noted that the label of ELT/Applied Linguistics does not suggest it as encompassing two disciplines but only fits with the data under study and the local context in which it was produced. Located within the broad domain of a soft science, this subject area is well suited to studying Appraisal options as research in this domain often requires more frequent and strategic exploitation of interpersonal resources constrained by the more qualitative and interpretive nature

of knowledge (Hyland, 1999a, 2000, 2010; Parry, 1998; 2007; Vázquez & Giner, 2008).

4.2.1.5 Variety of English

Flowerdew (2004) described this parameter as being large-scale varieties of English such as British or American English, which seems less relevant to the English language examined in the present research. Its focus of comparison is on the possible similarities and differences of interpersonal language use in doctoral theses by L1 Chinese and L1 English speakers. What should be emphasized again is that the comparison does not presume the superiority of the native discourse or inferiority of the non-native discourse (see 2.3). Rather, it aims at finding out whether L2 doctoral students will still show more problems than L1 students in interpersonal meaning-making, such as overstatement of significance of research findings, superficial engagement with the wider literature, or reliance on small range of language devices, as reported in the literature (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Chen, 2010; Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2005; Hood, 2004; Hyland & Milton, 1997); or whether, alternatively, both groups of writers, at this high level of study and yet being novice writers in their disciplinary community, will show substantially similar patterns of interpersonal meaning-making. For this reason, the current corpus is divided into two sub-corpora which contain 6 texts of discussion sections written by L1 Chinese and L1 English doctoral students,

respectively. The assignment of a writer as a L1 Chinese or L1 English speaker was based on a Chinese- or Anglophone- sounding name as well as educational and other general background information mostly found in the Acknowledgments of the theses.

As mentioned in 1.3, 10 out of the 12 texts were submitted during the period from 2007 to 2011, and the other two were submitted in 2001 and 2012, respectively. Although these texts were produced over a span of about ten years, it can be argued that in this particular genre the language feature under investigation – the use of Appraisal – is not one that tends to change in this sort of timescale. Moreover, it has been explained in 1.3 that the institutional culture of CAL seemed to remain stable during the period. The difference in dates therefore is not considered likely to influence the Appraisal options which will be found.

To summarize, the specialized corpus used in this study is by no means taken as representative of doctoral theses in general. It is in fact seen as a systematic collection of discussion sections of doctoral theses in one particular discipline (ELT/Applied Linguistics) produced by particular writers (L1 Chinese and L1 English speakers) at a particular institution (CAL, Warwick University). The fact that the present corpus is not representative of thesis writing in general constrains the generaliability of the findings based on it. However, any

corpus-based study is subject to the issue of generaliability, and accordingly “conclusions drawn from a particular corpus must be treated as deductions rather than facts” (McEnery, Xiao, & Tono, 2006, p. 73). Evaluations of generaliability of findings are presented in 10.1.

4.2.2 Data cleaning

Today’s fast development of technology has made a large amount of data digitally available for research analysis. Yet, most data are in portable document format (*.pdf* file) and hence are not suitable for use by corpus annotation and analysis software such as the UAM CorpusTool which can read simple text format (*.txt* file) only. These data have to go through cleaning and format conversion before being able to be analyzed by computer-assisted corpus tools.

For the current study, the discussion section of each thesis was first extracted from its original *PDF* document of the whole thesis as a separate *PDF* file by means of *Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro*, which is a type of software enabling easy editing of *PDF* texts. All the extracted files were then saved as *Word* (*.doc*) files. Next, these texts were cleaned by removing the non-text portion such as tables, charts, figures, and footnotes etc. Misspellings of words and mis-orderings of sentences caused by conversion were also checked and corrected, and the documents were saved in *.txt* format. The whole process of conversion ensures

that the corpus can be properly annotated and analyzed by the UAM CorpusTool (version 3.0 beta 3) that was used during the main coding stage (see Chapter 6).

The 12 cleaned texts were labeled by the first letter in the author's last name, for example, J represents Jiang's text. When the first letter is the same in several authors' last names, a second letter was selected for differentiation, for example, W represents Wu and WG represents Wang. A list of names and letters appears in Appendix IV. This labeling of texts allows for an easy trace of each corresponding original text when necessary and ensures that the reader will not confuse the labeling of the data source with a citation.

4.3 Corpus annotation

In corpus linguistics, annotation is a practice that adds linguistic information to a corpus in an automatic or a computer-aided manual way (Leech, 1993; 2005). Although some researchers consider annotation can destroy the raw corpus by integrating it with human's interpretation (Sinclair, 2005), annotation is useful for research purposes and even a wide users' own purposes when the annotated corpus is made public as long as annotation is conducted carefully based on principles (Leech, 2005). According to different aims, a corpus can be annotated at various levels such as grammatical annotation (e.g. part-of-speech tagging), semantic annotation (e.g. semantic category tagging), and discourse annotation that applies to units of texts beyond sentence boundaries (Leech,

1993; 2005). The current research has engaged in semantic annotation of interpersonal language using Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal framework as annotating scheme by the UAM CorpusTool (Version 3.0 beta). Since the underlying theoretical framework is a functional one, the annotation of which linguistic item or text span functions as interpersonal language inevitably involves my subjectivity. The understanding of Appraisal theory and interpretations of the co-text by different analysts may also lead to different annotations of the same selected item or stretch of text. However, principles for annotation are clearly documented in Chapter 6 so as to allow the reader or other potential users of this corpus to check my codings. The use of the UAM CorpusTool also helped me check the consistency of annotations of similar wordings by its search function (see 6.1). The annotation of the current corpus therefore is an interpretative act which identifies types of interpersonal language used by L1 Chinese and L1 English doctoral students so as to answer research question 1 (see 1.4). The annotation further provides bases for quantitative comparisons of the use of interpersonal language by these two groups (see Chapter 7) so as to answer research question 2 (see 1.4). In addition to this quantitative analysis, the annotation also allows me to answer research question 3 (see 1.4) by looking at Appraisal options that were used across stretches of discourse for the purpose of discussing the writers' own research findings in

relation to previous literature and finding tendencies for such co-articulations (see Chapter 8). The qualitative analysis therefore complements the quantitative analysis which compares the frequencies of Appraisal options used and offers more insights about how these options were used at the discourse level to achieve the rhetorical purpose of discussion sections of doctoral theses.

Chapter 5 Pilot coding

5.1 Aims

The pilot coding started in February, 2012 with a twofold aim: 1) to learn to apply the Appraisal model to annotating the interpersonal language in the genre under investigation; and 2) to explore the density and frequency of Appraisal features that occurred in the texts for pilot coding and thus determine the level of delicacy for main coding (see Chapter 6) and predict if the 12 texts available would yield adequate Appraisal items for linguistic analysis.

One text from the L₁C corpus and one from the L₁E corpus were randomly selected for pilot coding. Annotations during this stage were conducted by use of *Microsoft Word* for the experimental reason of practicing interpreting the target texts using the Appraisal framework without dealing with specialized coding software. Therefore, I first read one text paragraph by paragraph and highlighted the stretch of text that I considered as interpersonal language and assigned it with an Appraisal feature in brackets. The annotation of the 2 texts yielded 553 and 962 instances of Appraisal items, respectively, in which the number of Attitude and Graduation items were much less than that of Engagement.

The preliminary coding results showed that most of the Attitude resources were found in the area of Appreciation, and therefore it seemed not necessary to go

into much delicacy in Attitude by differentiating Affect, Appreciation and Judgment in Martin and White's (2005) model, but simply to indicate positive or negative. As Graduation can operate with both Engagement and Attitude category (see 3.1 for descriptions of the three categories), I decided to differentiate between the up-scale and down-scale categories but not between the Force and Focus categories since the former two categories can operate across Force and Focus categories and vary the degree of interpersonal evaluation of or investment in a proposition. As for Engagement, annotation was conducted at all levels only excepting the more delicate level within Concur due to its sparse occurrence in the pilot, which means that I decided not to differentiate Affirm and Concede in Martin and White's (2005) model.

By the end of the pilot study, a coding scheme (see Figure 5.1) was established which served as the basis of an analysis of the entire corpus. However, it needs to be explicitly pointed out that the main coding is an iterative process during which I was responsive to data and therefore refined the scheme as necessary (i.e. the addition of a genre-specific category, see 6.4.9).

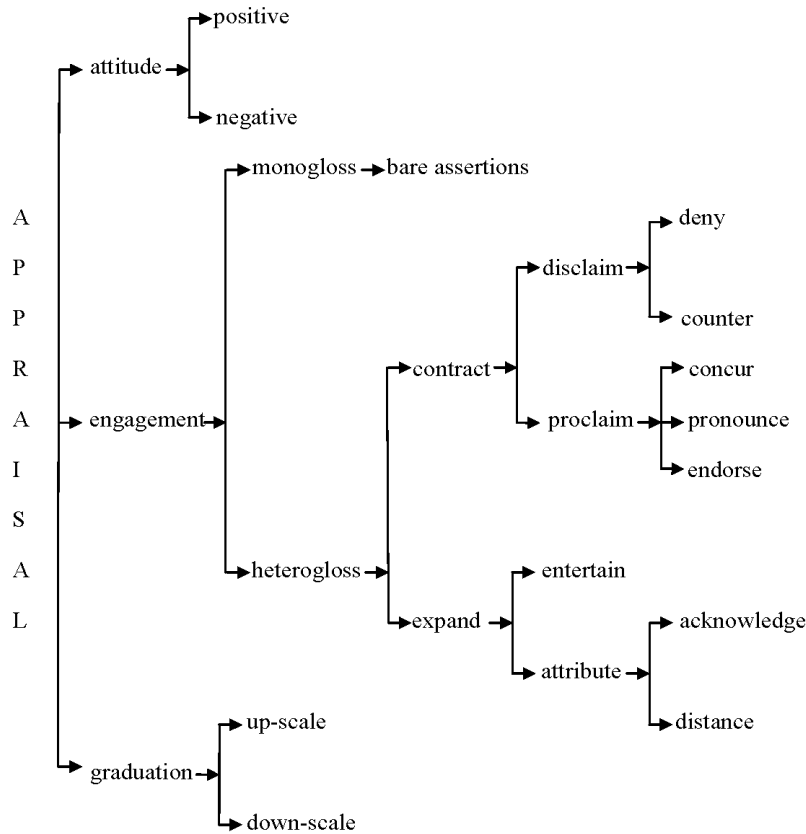


Figure 5.1 *Coding Scheme after Pilot Study, derived from Martin and White (2005)*

As can be seen, categories of Attitude and Graduation are not extended in great detail, compared to Martin and White’s (2005) model (see Figure 3.2).

Engagement, on the other hand, is treated at many more levels of delicacy. In this sub-system, the coding of an Engagement option not only differentiates whether it is “monoglossic” (options that construe utterances as not recognizing the diversity of viewpoints within the communicative context and not engaging with them at all) or “heteroglossic” (options that construe utterances as acknowledging and making reference to other voices and viewpoints), but also differentiates whether it is “dialogic contractive” (closing down space for

alternative viewpoints) or “dialogic expansive” (opening up space for alternative viewpoints) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 102). Once an Engagement option is coded as dialogic contractive or expansive, the coding goes further to a more delicate level by examining which sub-category it belongs to within the sub-system of “Engagement: Contract” or “Engagement: Expand.” An example of this detailed coding during the pilot is demonstrated below:

Regarding the academic nature of student motivation, **Dörnyei sees it as** [engagement: attribute: acknowledge] ‘... –hopefully – an important facet of the learners’ general disposition toward attending school...’ (2005: 86). (L, 2007:196)

In summary, the pilot coding gave a good indication of which Appraisal features would be more salient for this data and allowed me to identify some problems with coding using Appraisal theory. The coding issues encountered were discussed and addressed through discussion with my supervisor during tutorials and with examiners of my first panel review. All the consultations also guided my coding decisions of the Appraisal features that I examined in this study (see 6.4).

5.2 Descriptions and examples of relevant Appraisal options

For a better understanding of various Appraisal options that were included in the above coding scheme (see Figure 5.1), this section presents descriptions of them based on Martin and White (2005) and corresponding

examples from the 2 texts analyzed in the pilot. The examples presented here are transparent enough to show which Appraisal category they belong to even without extensive co-text, but as a general rule the process of assigning an instance of interpersonal expression with a particular Appraisal label is complex and demands an intensive reading of the co-text (see 6.4 about detailed explanations of coding decisions). The ultimate aim of this section is to provide an overall understanding of the functions of these categories for any reader who may be less familiar with Appraisal theory.

5.2.1 Attitude

Attitude concerns three kinds of feeling relating to emotion (Affect), ethics (Judgment), and aesthetics (Appreciation) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 42). As was explained above, the occurrence of Attitude options was low throughout the pilot coding, therefore, a decision was taken to code Attitude without going into detail except for the differentiation between positive or negative value, which have opposite effect on the interpersonal positioning. For example, the examples below were coded as positive and negative Attitude, respectively:

That the drawing task (see Task 6, Appendix 1) ranked first was *good* evidence in this regard... (L, 2007: 197)

The task went all right at first, but ended up *causing a girl to cry*. (L, 2007: 203)

5.2.2 Engagement

Engagement concerns “linguistic resources by which speakers/writers adopt a stance towards the value positions being referenced by the text and with respect to those they address” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 92). Therefore, Engagement has to do with intersubjective positioning and encompasses semantic options for adjusting the argumentative force of speakers/writers’ propositions and negotiating the propositions with alternative voices held by actual or potential respondents in an ongoing communicative event. Martin and White’s (2005) mapping of Engagement sits in a tradition which views that any spoken or written utterance is “dialogic” in that “to speak or write is always to reveal the influence of, refer to, or to take up in some way, what has been said/written before, and simultaneously to anticipate the responses of actual, potential or imagined readers/listeners” (p. 92). From this dialogic perspective, the system of Engagement is classified into “Monogloss” and “Heterogloss” with the former category referring to the option that makes no reference to other voices and viewpoints and the latter referring to options that do so. In terms of the degree of allowance for alternative voices, the heteroglossic sub-system is further classified into “Contract” and “Expand” with the former category consisting of options that reduce dialogic space for different viewpoints (Disclaim and Proclaim) and the latter of options that increase such space

(Entertain and Attribute) (Martin & White, 2005). In general, Appraisal theory proposes that the more a linguistic item indicates high interpersonal investment in a proposition and thus contracts the dialogic space for alternative views the less likely a counter-argument will arise. Martin and White (2005) argued that contractive meanings, “while they construe a dialogistic backdrop for the text of other voices and other value positions, are directed towards excluding certain dialogic alternatives from any subsequent communicative interaction” (p. 117). However, this is not something that can be empirically researched – the writers’ cannot know what counter-arguments do or do not arise in the readers’ minds as they engage with a text. It seems sensible to assume that the effectiveness of contractive engagement options in reducing the possibility of counter-argument may depend on what type of actual or imagined reader that the writer would face. For example, if a proposition advanced by Pronounce which indicates the writer’s high emphasis on the reliability of it is at odds with the imagined reader who is reading resistantly, such strong contraction of dialogic space is more likely to be a threat to writer-reader alignment and may even ‘provoke’ the reader into disagreement. In contrast, increased dialogic contraction is likely to build alignment with the reader who is reading compliantly. The following sections explain each of the categories of the Appraisal framework in turn.

5.2.2.1 Monogloss

As previously mentioned, Monogloss, or Bare Assertion refers to utterances that ignore any actual or potential divergent voices within a given communication, which were traditionally seen as objective facts (Martin & White, 2005). For example,

...*the teacher has a key role to play in affecting student motivation*. (L, 2007: 202)

5.2.2.2 Disclaim

Disclaim is one contractive sub-category of Engagement by which “some alternative position is invoked so as to be directly rejected, replaced or held to be unsustainable” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 118). The option of Disclaim: Deny is typically realized by negation, and semantics of Deny function to introduce the positive position into the communication but to directly refute it. The other option Disclaim: Counter comprises linguistic resources which replace “a proposition which would have been expected in its place” (p. 120). Some examples are:

Deny: its [COMMUNICATIVE] definition is *not* stable over time. (HT, 2009: 242)

Counter: They seemed to agree with the course requirement *though* they felt bored with the prescribed course book. (L, 2007: 97)

5.2.2.3 Proclaim

Another dialogic contractive category is Proclaim, which sets the textual voice as “highly warrantable” or “generally agreed” so that alternative views are

suppressed or ruled out (Martin & White, 2005, p. 98). Proclaim has three sub-categories: Concur, Pronounce, and Endorse. Semantics of Concur represents the textual proposition as being expected or shared by a majority of voices in a communication. Pronounce is concerned with expressions which involve speakers/writers' emphasis of the reliability of a proposition. This authorial intervention can be realized explicitly through expressions such as "*I contend...*" or implicitly through expressions such as "*The facts of the matter are that...*" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 131). Endorse typically deals with propositions from external voices which are presented as "correct, valid, undeniable or otherwise maximally warrantable" and as in line with the internal textual proposition (Martin & White, 2005, p. 126). Consequently, Endorse functions to negate potentially different views and increase the degree of argumentative force of the position being advanced by the text. Some examples are:

Concur: ***Normally*** learners' engagement or participation in a task is measured by some observable behaviour such as speaking or writing. (L, 2007: 200)

Pronounce: ***In fact***, throughout the project, the real value of collocation data to analysis was extremely variable. (HT, 2009: 272)

Endorse: Teaching in the classroom is a complex job which is both academic and social in nature. ***As Dörnyei (2005) says***, 'the classroom, is also a social arena...' (L, 2007: 261)

5.2.2.4 Entertain

The category of Entertain deals with resources by which the textual view is represented as “but one of a range of possible positions” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 98). Therefore, the semantics of Entertain invokes the diversity of views in a communicative event and opens up the dialogic space for negotiating with alternatives. For example:

...they would *probably* sacrifice their time and energy for learning English for those things. (L, 2007: 270)

It *seems to* encapsulate and include many of the trends that were highlighted in the word histories. (HT, 2009: 246)

5.2.2.5 Attribute

Attribute is concerned with formulations which “involve the inclusion in the text of some explicitly external voice” (White, 2001c, p. 6). Although Attribution also involves external sources, its rhetorical function differs from Endorse, which closes down the dialogic space for negotiating alternative positions by construing reported voice as authoritative and irrefutable (Martin & White, 2005). Attribute, on the contrary, presents a proposition as just one of a set of views grounded on the subjectivity of an external voice and therefore opens up space for the actual or potential respondent who may hold alternative views. By tracing the proposition being advanced to its origins, Attribution construes the speaker/writer as not taking responsibility for that proposition.

They can either simply introduce its source without showing alignment or disalignment (Acknowledge) or they can show explicit disalignment (Distance).

It is important to note that, in the genre examined, the identification of a span of text as one of the three options (Distance, Acknowledge, and Endorse) was not as easy and explicit as one can identify in Martin & White's (2005) examples which seem to function mainly by reference to the reporting verbs. In Martin and White (2005), Distance is explained as often realized by "the use of *claim*" which "mark[s] explicitly the internal authorial voice as separate from the cited, external voice" (p. 113). However, in the current corpus, most realizations of Distance did not involve reported speech via the verb *claim*; and in some cases, the reporting proposition by use of *claim* even functioned as Endorse in terms of co-text (see 6.4.7). In fact, during the pilot study when my knowledge about Appraisal theory was not well developed, the use of Distance was not identified in the 2 analyzed texts, although 4 instances from the text of HT (2009) were identified as Distance in the main coding. Instead of considering these cases as inconsistencies in my coding, it actually reveals my developing understanding of Appraisal theory with the increasing experience of applying it to analyzing my data. For this reason, only the option of Acknowledge from the pilot is shown below and detailed explanation of coding decision of Distance and examples are presented in 6.4.7.

Acknowledge: This investigation of the discourse of a single publication is, in Stern's terms, 'a study of a particular aspect'... (HT, 209: 247)

To sum up, in Engagement sub-system, monoglossic utterances ignores the dialogic divergence whereas heteroglossic utterances acknowledge the divergence despite their different adjustment of the dialogic space for negotiation with alternative views. Contractive heterogloss acknowledges the diversity of viewpoints but for excluding them and thus closes down the space for negotiation. Expansive heterogloss, on the contrary, opens up such space by representing the textual voice as but one of a range of positions or directly bringing in an external voice.

5.2.3 Graduation

The semantics of Graduation adjust the semantics of Attitude (see 5.2.3) by raising or lowering the degree of evaluation, which is termed as Force in Appraisal. Linguistically, it can be realized by "adverbs of intensification" (e.g. *slightly, really, completely*) and qualifiers of "quantity, extent, and proximity in time and space" (e.g. *large, many, near, far*) (White, 2001a, p. 7). Graduation also covers values which narrow or broaden the "prototypicality and the preciseness by which category boundaries are drawn" and is termed as Focus (Martin and White, 2005, p. 137).

As was explained in 5.1, the pilot coding showed that the occurrence of Graduation was not high but this category can scale both the domain of Attitude and that of Engagement by manipulating the degree of the “speaker/writer’s intensity, or the degree of their investment in the utterance” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 136). For this reason, it is worth differentiating the up-scale or down-scale of a Graduation option as it will affect the values of Attitude and Engagement. For example,

Up-scale: once personal development motivation has been ‘internalised’, it gets *very* close to ‘intrinsic motivation’... (L, 2007: 200)

Down-scale: These tendencies achieve *a sort of* culmination in the three papers... (HT, 2009: 246)

So far, this chapter has explained the relevant Appraisal options that were coded during the pilot with respect to corresponding examples in order to present a whole picture of the complexity of Appraisal theory. Secondly, it explained some basic principles (i.e. the level of delicacy) for coding the rest of texts in this corpus according to the frequency of occurrence of different options. While these principles were useful, the main coding still involved many decisions to be made since certain problematic items emerged as the coding went on, which were either not noted or misunderstood during pilot and therefore required refinement of coding. The next chapter elaborates the process of main coding and the coding decisions of each Appraisal option presented above.

Chapter 6 Main coding

The sections below take the form of a narrative to explain the main coding of the entire corpus in detail. My intention in choosing this style of reporting is to enhance the trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) of the study, by documenting the process of coding and the development of the modified framework (see Figure 6.6) as transparently as possible. I wish to show how text analysis and framework development took place concurrently, via an iterative process involving checking, rechecking and sometimes modification as necessary.

6.1 Annotation tool

Unlike using a word processor in the pilot coding, the main coding utilized the computerized annotation tool, UAM CorpusTool (Version 3.0 beta) developed by Mick O'Donnell. This is a powerful tool enabling “annotation of multiple texts using the same annotation schemes” and “comparative statistics across subsets,”⁸ both of which meet the needs of the current research.

More generally, annotation of Appraisal conducted by this software has a number of advantages over the annotation by *Microsoft Word*, as I did in the pilot coding. First of all, as the UAM CorpusTool provides an interface

⁸ <http://www.wagsoft.com/CorpusTool/features.html>

displaying the text, it allows the analyst easily annotate a text by selecting the span of text to be marked and then clicking the category for the incorporated coding scheme to assign to the selected text span. Secondly, this tool enables a quick retrieval of a coded item and thus facilitates an easy examination of any item with its co-text when necessary. Thirdly, this tool enables modification of the coding scheme at any time and automatically makes a corresponding change of annotations in terms of the modified scheme. For example, if the label of one Appraisal category is changed, annotations of all text segments belonging to this category will be changed accordingly. More importantly, the UAM CorpusTool allows a new category to be added to a coding framework at any time without damaging the cohesion of the framework: this advantage is what Seror (2005) mentioned as “system closure” in Richards and Richards’ (1998) term, which “facilitates recursive qualitative data analysis” (p. 323). This advantage was found to be of great importance during the main coding as one genre-specific category had to be added to the coding scheme developed at the end of pilot due to the emergence of more data that did not fit well in that scheme (see Figure 5.1).

Another aspect of recursive data analysis which the UAM CorpusTool facilitates is the ability to reconsider categorizations of individual segments. When I encountered some problematic items in one text during the analysis,

this tool allowed me to quickly retrieve the same or similar expressions in other texts and see how they were coded. This function helped me check the consistency of my codings in a way which would be hardly achieved by analysis using a word process as in the pilot coding. Lastly, the comment function of this tool further enabled me to record the reasoning behind coding decisions or any possible uncertainties about coding. Such comments provided me a chance to revisit my annotations and provided possible future users with a window to understand my coding process.

While the use of the UAM CorpusTool brought several benefits, caution should be made to its potential limitations, as those of other computer-assisted software. Jones (2007) mentioned about “the trap of turning qualitative accounts into semi-quantitative arrays of analysis by enumerating the facts rather than interpreting them” (p. 8), echoing the issue of “closeness to data” which prevents analysts from abstracting and interpreting the data at the conceptual level (Seror, 2005). Jones (2007) and Seror (2005) also pointed out that computer-assisted software can work to distance analysts from their original data as the software can make analysts lose sight of the context. However, my annotation of Appraisal features in this corpus was indeed a qualitative act that was necessitated by the functional nature of the theoretical framework and any quantitative work was based on the qualitative annotations. This means, each

label of Appraisal feature in my annotations represents a functional category, and stretches of text which were identified as having the same function through a qualitative analysis of co-text were assigned to the same category (see 6.4). This annotation procedure treats each Appraisal option along the same lines as with Li and Wharton's (2012) coding of Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse options in their corpus. They described each metadiscourse option as "a qualitative, nominal variable with a number of specific categories" (p. 347), and this is also applies to each Appraisal option in this study. Overall, the UAM CorpusTool facilitated a faster and more systematic analysis, which enabled me to compare the Appraisal options used across two sub-corpora that I defined. The rest of this section illustrates the process of analysis by use of this tool.

The first step was to load texts in my corpus into the UAM CorpusTool. The second step was to incorporate the coding scheme (see Figure 5.1) established by the pilot into this tool so as to be able to click to assign an Appraisal feature to a stretch of text and to make a digital record of my annotations and coding decisions where needed. It is important to emphasize that as the UAM CorpusTool allows changes to a coding scheme along with corresponding coded items as the annotation goes along, the fact that I began by incorporating the post-pilot version of coding scheme did not mean that I was

restricted to using only that version or that my annotations would have been destroyed had the coding scheme was modified.

The third step was to manually annotate Appraisal features in the whole corpus. As stressed many times, this was an iterative process, facilitated by the UAM CorpusTool which makes it possible to a) retrieve and review any given coded item and its coding decision, b) compare similar coding decisions, c) revise the coding framework without destroying the completed annotations. Once annotation is completed, the tool allows for a systematic quantitative comparison of Appraisal options employed within the whole corpus and across the two sub-corpora.

The following sections illustrate my selection of the text spans for coding (6.2), my selection of interpersonal language for coding (6.3) and explain my theoretically principled coding decisions (6.4), and finally present the modified scheme and an excerpt of fully coded text (6.5).

6.2 Selection of the text spans for coding

Due to the main research aim of exploring the deployment of authorial interpersonal positioning, my annotation was restricted to language that expresses the author's own interpersonal attitude. However, the selection of precisely which language in a given stretch of text is fulfilling this function is not a simple matter. Interpersonal meaning is always dependent on co-text and any

decision to highlight some words but not others will be to some extent arbitrary.

Nevertheless, it is necessary if there is to be any quantitative dimension to the work; an analyst can only “count” uses of Appraisal resources if separate instances of them have been identified (also see 1.5).

In the present research, for a neat presentation of coded texts, selection of the text spans for coding was restricted to the minimum length of text that can represent the Appraisal meaning.

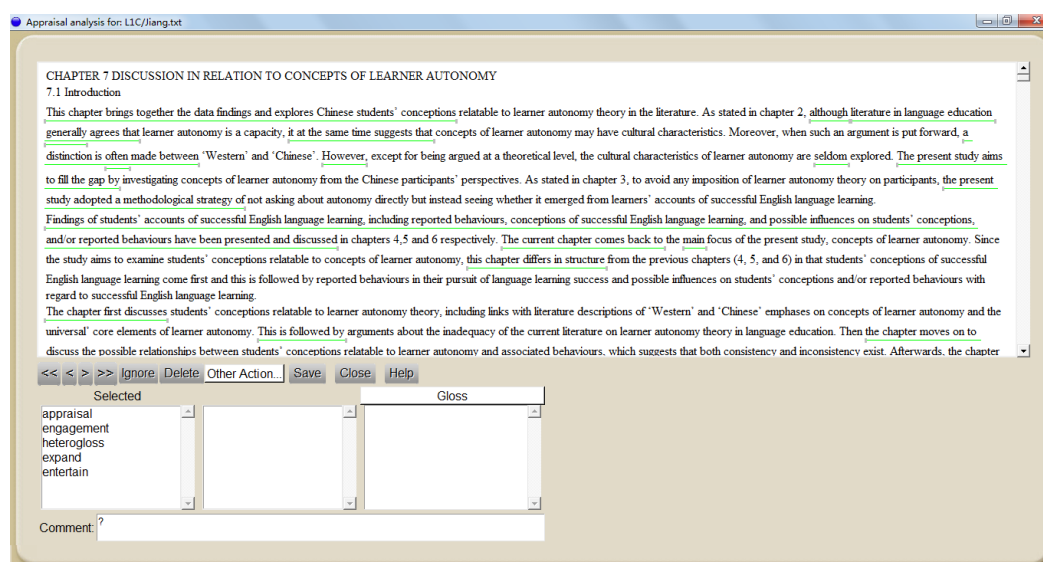


Figure 6.1 Example of Annotations of J's (2008) Text

Figure 6.1 displays a sample of the selected text spans for coding (the underlined segments). For example, instead of selecting the whole first sentence, selection was restricted to *This chapter brings together findings and explores Chinese students*, which can represent the proposition conveyed by the complete sentence. In the following sentences, the items *although* and *however* signaling a

countering proposition were selected for coding; and the single word *generally*, *often*, and *seldom* were selected for coding as each of them by itself can convey a clear Appraisal meaning.

This restricted selection of text spans ensured a clear display of annotations but the selection of a minimum text span will not have a negative effect on the qualitative analysis of the deployment of Appraisal options in that the UAM CorpusTool allows easy trace of a larger co-text of all annotations. For instance, Figure 6.2 below shows part of the search results of the Distance option employed in the corpus.

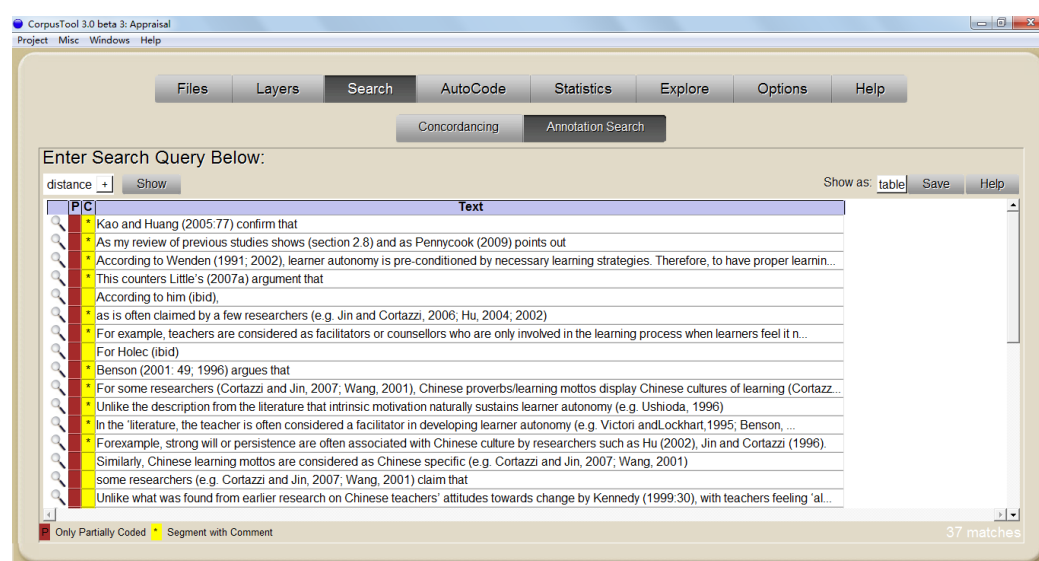


Figure 6.2 Search Results of Engagement: Attribute: Distance in the Current Corpus

A simple click of the small magnifying glass to the left of each instance will show the whole sentence of it as well as its co-text. For example, by clicking the first instance *Kao and Huang (2005: 77) confirm that*, the UAM CorpusTool

will automatically locate it and highlight it in grey to display, as shown by Figure

6.3.

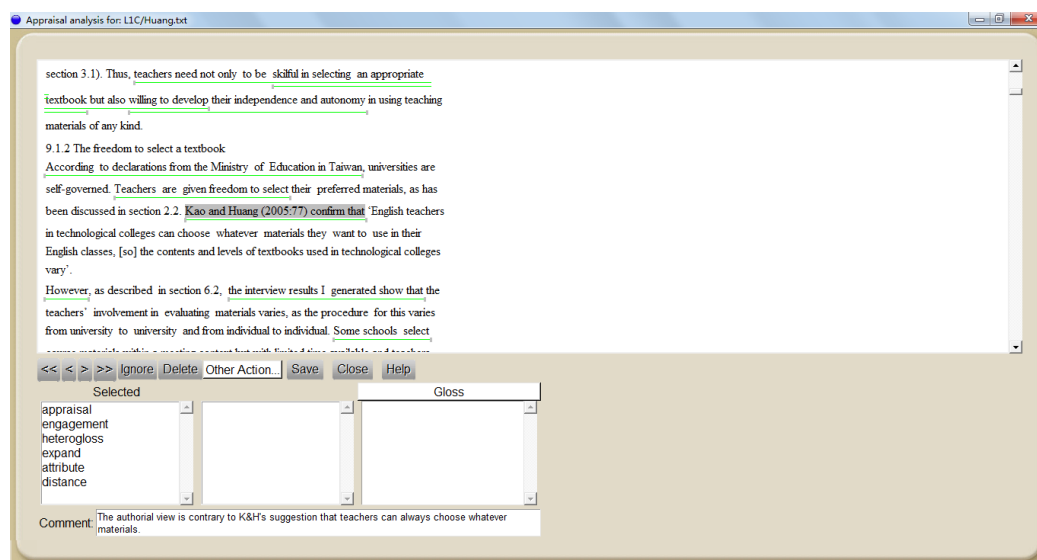


Figure 6.3 *Viewing the Whole Sentence and Co-text of a Coded Item*

In this way, other users can view the full proposition of a coded text span and its co-text as much as they need to understand the coding and see how an Appraisal option was used in a particular situation. Moreover, the documentation of my reason for coding this instance as Distance in the “comment box” also allows future readers to review my coding decisions, which helps to increase the credibility of this research (see 10.1). Equally, the decision to highlight minimal text spans for annotation also has no negative effect on quantitative results. If the analyst wishes, for example, to count the number of instances of Distance which appeared across the two sub-corpora, then the length of the text span which has been coded is immaterial.

6.3 Selection of interpersonal language for coding

As stated in 6.2 that the main research objective is to explore the deployment of authorial interpersonal positioning, it was therefore necessary to distinguish instances of language that expressed the author's appraisal from instances of language where the appraisal was sourced to a different voice. Linguistic resources that express any other voice's interpersonal positioning – such as that of cited literature, or that of research participants – were beyond the scope of this study and were not selected for coding. The rest of this section presents four such types of interpersonal language, which include interpersonal expressions attributed to external voices (6.3.1), expressions that look like potential interpersonal resources but in fact describe phenomena (6.3.2) or processes (6.3.3), and interpersonal resources expressed in dependent clauses (6.3.4).

6.3.1 Interpersonal language attributed to external sources

This section presents some examples to show expressions which are interpersonal but are sourced to an external voice other than the author's. It is not necessary to code such expressions in this corpus because they are outside of the scope of the research questions, for instance:

1. In addition, once personal development motivation has been ‘internalised’, it gets very close to ‘intrinsic motivation’, which is seen to be an *ideal* state of learning (Deci and Ryan, 2002). (L, 2007: 200)
2. So then for Mr. Brown [a research interviewee] the content, such as the topic or the academic genre, or that the text would cite references would *not* classify a text as academic if the length were insufficient. (G, 2008: 234)
3. Since in Taiwan, teachers are typically considered to be *the ultimate source of knowledge in the classroom* and most language classes are teacher-centred, a teacher’s knowledge about the subject may substantially determine the value Taiwanese learners attach to the teacher and to the course. (W, 2010: 197)

The item *ideal* in example 1 and the expression *the ultimate source of knowledge in the classroom* in example 3 represented positive Attitude. The evaluations, however, are sourced to the cited literature, Deci and Ryan (2002), and to general Taiwanese society, and therefore they did not represent the authorial Attitude. In example 2, the denial of the proposition realized by *not* was made by a research interviewee Mr. Brown rather than the author and thus this item was not coded as an instance of Deny. In sum, none of the Appraisal resources employed in the three examples needs to be coded in that they did not represent the thesis writers’ own interpersonal positioning.

However, I must emphasize that, what does matter in such examples is not the content of the propositions but rather how the thesis writers positioned themselves in relation to the wider literature or their own research data: whether they strongly aligned with such external voice or whether they distanced from it.

This certainly falls within the scope of the study and was intensively explored (see 8.1).

6.3.2 Potential interpersonal resources that describe phenomena

This section shows some examples which look like interpersonal expressions at first sight, however, a close reading of these examples will reveal that such expressions were simply used to describe rather than evaluate some phenomena, for instance:

4. Students' awareness of its importance becomes *clearer* as they go through advancing 'developmental stages' (Williams and Burden, 1997) as well. (L, 2007: 199)
5. When discussing this issue, my interviewees and I all agreed that the *smaller* class size encouraged better learning and teaching effects and made them and me feel more comfortable in class. (L, 2007: 204)

Clearer in example 4 is a term which might potentially be seen as an Attitude realization, either within the voice of the author or within that of Williams and Burden (1997). However, a contextual reading suggests that it is not: it just formed part of the proposition about what happened to student awareness, and therefore it was not selected for coding. In examples 5, *smaller* simply described the class size and hence is not a realization of, i.e. negative Attitude. It is therefore not necessary to be coded.

6.3.3 Potential interpersonal resources that describe processes

Similar to examples presented above, there are also some expressions which look like evaluative items but in fact were used to describe processes, for instance:

6. I shall now *briefly* summarise how teachers conduct evaluations in terms of pre-, in-, and post-use phases. (HG, 2011: 199)
7. All materials analyzed, except for one set (The Korean Elementary School course) started *immediately* with substantial quantities of printed English words. (R, 2011: 237)

Briefly and *immediately* in the above two examples, although they are lexical items frequently used to realize the option of Graduation, functioned here as circumstance adjuncts that simply described the process being expressed and did not raise the writers' interpersonal investment in that proposition. They are different from the following examples:

8. The procedures and criteria for selecting a textbook *greatly* depend on individual local context and situation, and even vary from individual to individual. (HG, 2011: 222)
9. Rather, our difference in self-efficacy beliefs was *substantially* influenced by our language teacher selves. (W, 2010: 186)

Greatly and *substantially* in example 8 and 9 acted to raise the intensity of the manner in which the process was undertaken, which reflects the author's own

point of view on the proposition being expressed. Accordingly, they functioned as the up-scale option of Graduation (also see Hood, 2004; Martin & White, 2005).

6.3.4 Potential interpersonal resources expressed in dependent clauses

During the main coding of the corpus, I needed to come to a decision regarding the status of dependent or rankshifted clauses and potential Appraisal resources within them – specifically, whether such clauses needed to be coded. This section discusses the principles behind my decision. In the following four examples, potential Appraisal resources located in dependent or rankshifted clauses were not coded, for reasons which are discussed below:

10. Embedded in these conceptions, features that *tended to* accord with learner autonomy theory in the literature were revealed and examined. (J, 2008: 264)
11. This also supports the theory that a teacher may behave atypically regardless of the identity of the observer, or the purpose of the observation [2.4], *although* there *may be* perceived degrees of adjustment depending on familiarity. (HW, 2010: 307)
12. *When meanings are altered* the alteration will accommodate certain action to the exclusion of others. (G, 2008: 237)
13. Administrators believe it is important for writing instructors to “follow the textbook” for the writing program to have a semblance of continuity and cohesion, while evidence points to teachers certainly not following the textbook as a syllabus *because they have a high level of autonomy.* (G, 2008: 252)

In example 10, the Entertain option realized by *tended to* was employed in a restrictive relative clause functioning as a post-modifier of “features,” which did not vary the degree of authorial interpersonal positioning towards the proposition being construed and consequently it is not necessary to code it. Equally, there is no need to code the realizations of Counter (*Although*) and that of Entertain (*maybe*) in example 11, as they are part of the relative clause that described the theory.

When meanings are altered in example 12 represents an example of circumstance clause, which has the appearance of a realization of Bare Assertion in terms of its neutral intersubjectivity. Nevertheless, this clause simply construed the circumstance in which the following Material Process was undertaken but did not affect the authorial interpersonal positioning with respect to the main proposition. For this reason, circumstance clauses or other interpersonal resources expressed in such clauses were not selected for coding. Example 13 shows a different case in which the dependent clause *because they have a high level of autonomy* was just a continuation of what the evidence points to, not a separate proposition, and therefore is unnecessary to code it.

However, interpersonal resources expressed in dependent clauses as shown below were decided to be coded.

14. Instead, the middle way is, for most participants, the most reasonable approach which *best* represents the nature of things. (WG, 2007)

15. Through this examination, ruptures have surfaced within the EAW program which reveal the *very* nature of the Department itself. (G, 2008)

The non-defining relative clauses in example 14 and 15 are different from example 10, which function was only to post-modify. Involved in each of the above two clauses there was more of an actual proposition and thus they were coded as Bare Assertion. Furthermore, *best* in example 14 enhanced the intensity of the manner of process and thus added extra interpersonal value to the proposition so that it was coded as Graduation: up-scale. While in example 15, the categorical meaning of *nature* was strengthened by the use of *very*, a realization of Graduation: up-scale.

The above two sections have explained the selection of text for coding in this study. The subsequent sections explain the decisions which I made about which Appraisal category to choose to label excerpts once they had been established as suitable candidates for coding.

6.4 Coding decisions

Situated within the SFL tradition, Appraisal theory by nature explores interpersonal meanings from a functional perspective. All the Appraisal options explained by Martin and White (2005) are not prescriptive but rather descriptive. It is essential to realize that what Martin and White (2005) have offered is a series of functional and semantic categories, which can be realized differently in different

genres. In their book (2005), they certainly provided examples of linguistic resources fulfilling different functions, but in no way do they argue that a given form will always realize a given function. The linguistic resources which they showed as realizing one Appraisal function could in principle realize a different one if employed in different co-text or discourse domain. Therefore, the coding of interpersonal language identified in my data was not only informed by examples presented by Martin and White (2005) but was also very strongly based on its co-text and on my awareness that it formed part of a discussion section which can be seen as a “part-genre” (Dudley-Evans, 1998) of the doctoral thesis (see 2.5).

This means that, although all coding decisions were theoretically grounded, decisions for coding some ambiguous items were particularly subject to my own reading of them and their co-text, and thus may be interpreted as a different Appraisal option by different reader. This is inevitable in qualitative, interpretive work. In order to do everything possible to ensure the “confirmability” and “dependability” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) of my decisions, the problematic items that I encountered during the annotation of each text were all documented in separate *Word* files with my questions about the coding, which were sent to my supervisor for her review and returned to me with her comments on each of the items. We then met to discuss our understanding in detail, and to try to reach decisions based on principles which could be applied to the rest of the corpus. By

the end of main coding, 376 instances of problematic items were recorded. As we discussed the items during my tutorials we used the UAM CorpusTool to explore as much co-text as was necessary to be sure that we arrived at a good coding decision. A similar procedure was adopted by some other researchers who conducted Appraisal analysis without conducting inter-rater reliability, for example, Fryer (2013) and Fuoli (2013). This procedure helped to make agreement on coding and to ensure that the decisions were as principled and consistent as possible, and in my view is a more appropriate approach to ensure the trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) of this research given the interpretative nature of annotation involved.

Although some researchers would advocate the use of a second independent rater, this approach to establishing credibility would be inappropriate due to practical constraints of finding another annotator who are also familiar with Appraisal theory and are willing to immerse in coding all the data. In this research, I did not need to have recourse to inter-rater reliability to establish the value of the Appraisal framework as a coding scheme – I believe that its value has already been established by the large amount of research that has been done with it (see 3.2). In my case, the purpose of inter-rater checks would have only been to certify the consistency and correctness of my own codings and, as I have explained above, this was achieved in a different way.

The following sections elaborate my coding decisions of all Appraisal categories identified in the corpus one by one together with examples that illustrate them and at the end present the modified coding scheme and a description of a fully analyzed text.

6.4.1 Attitude

Attitude refers to utterances that express a positive or negative view on human, objects and events, as well as state of affairs, which were classified into three sub-categories of Judgment, Appreciation, and Affect by Martin and White (2005). As explained in 5.1, since the pilot demonstrated that most Attitude items identified in the corpus operated as Appreciation, the coding of a given span of text was therefore not concerned with which sub-category of Attitude that span belongs to but with whether it indicates a positive or negative interpersonal assessment. For example,

16. Learning a language is more *meaningful* if students have a purpose, for example communicating with people from different cultures. (HG, 2011: 219)
17. This indicates a *deficiency* in clarity of the understanding of fundamental assumptions about EAW as it is conceptualized in the native English context. (G, 2008: 241)

The item *meaningful* was a positive evaluation of the event of learning a language. The nominalized item *deficiency* represented a negative assessment of the comprehension about EAW.

In some cases, an interpersonal value was attached to not a single word but a span of text as in the following examples:

18. Such training would *help teachers to evaluate materials more systematically and consistently*; it would *empower teachers with a greater awareness of the prerequisites for effective materials*, and it would *help teachers to reflect and further develop their theories of language teaching*. (HG, 2010: 202)
19. This line of reasoning for the criteria of the textbook, while pragmatic, is *devoid of any theoretical approach toward teaching EAW*. (G, 2008: 250)

In example 18, it is each of the three stretches of text that fully represented a positive evaluation of a kind of training, not the word *help* itself. Similarly, the text span in example 19 indicated a negative evaluation of the reasoning for selecting textbooks.

6.4.2 Bare Assertion

Bare Assertion is the only monoglossic category in the Engagement system, which means that it does not construe a background of diverse viewpoints for the proposition being advanced. Barely asserted propositions present the writer as taking it for granted that the potential reader holds the same viewpoint or that the proposition being advanced is unproblematic. Some examples are:

20. *Teachers are given freedom to* select their preferred materials, as has been discussed in section 2.2. (HG, 2011: 197)
21. *...the effects of exams on learner motivation depend on* how teachers present them in the classroom. (W, 2010: 209)

The above examples were coded as Bare Assertion in that they did not overtly recognize any more or less divergent views existing in the ongoing communicative event, and the authors' interpersonal stance is therefore "undialogized" (Bakhtin, as cited in White, 2001c, p. 12).

6.4.3 Entertain

Entertain is in sharp contrast with Bare Assertion as it involves overtly referencing other alternative views and presents the current proposition as but one of a set of various possible positions. The semantics of Entertain therefore acknowledges the dialogic alternatives and indicates the author's willingness to negotiate with the convergent or divergent positions. Typical linguistic realizations of Entertain contain modal auxiliaries, adjuncts, and attributes of possibility (e.g. *may*, *probably*, *it's likely that...*) and subjective Mental Process (e.g. *I suspect that...*, *I believe*) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 105). Below are examples from this corpus:

22. A failure to recognise teachers' past achievements, experiences and challenges is *likely* to alienate them and/or reduce their commitment towards a new reform agenda. (C, 2001: 276)
23. *Perhaps* the most conclusive and easily-supported finding of the research undertaken is that the idea of 'communicative-ness' is central to the Journal's discourse over the period investigated. (HT, 2009: 241-2)
24. ...*it seems that there could be* additional pedagogic opportunities offered by adding more system to choices of words and their uses within the courses. (R, 2011: 245)

The semantics of *likely*, *perhaps* and *it seems that there could be* presented the authors' assessment of likelihood as located in an individual subjectivity, therefore, the proposition being advanced was construed as but one of a range of possible views. As a result, the dialogic space for different or even contradicting views was opened up, and a "more interpersonally favourable context for such alternation" was constructed (White, 2001c, p.6).

6.4.4 Deny and Counter

Deny and Counter are two dialogic contractive options in the Engagement: Disclaim sub-system (see 5.2.2.2). Although locutions of Deny and Counter also invoke some prior utterances or alternative views, they function to introduce such positions so as to refute or replace them. Therefore, the space for "dialogic alternation" is closed down (White, 2001c, p. 11). Deny is typically realized by negation, and Counter by "conjunctions and connectives such as *although*, *however*, *yet*, and *but*" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 120). An example of Deny and Counter in this corpus is:

25. The findings in this area of 'reasons' are therefore ***not*** generalizable and require further investigation, ***although*** they are of some interest in shedding light on an unexplored area. (HG, 2011: 210)

From a dialogic perspective, the use of *not* invoked the possibility of a contrary positive position that the findings are generalizable, but rejected that position. Similarly, the use of *although* invoked an expected view that the findings

are not useful if they are not generalizable, but again, this expectation is acknowledged only for being countered by the suggestion that they could still shed light on an unexplored area.

6.4.5 Concur and Pronounce

Concur and Pronounce are two dialogic contractive options in the Engagement: Proclaim sub-system (see 5.2.2.3). Concur is concerned with formulations (e.g. “*naturally, of course, and obviously*”) by which writers present a position as generally shared within a given speech community (Martin & White, 2005, p. 98). Therefore, although writers actively engage with the prior or potential respondents in that community, their tolerance for alternative views is minimal. Pronounce refers to formulations that present a position as highly convincing and thus simultaneously refute any challenging position and close down the dialogic space for the alternative views. Realizations of Pronounce usually include “explicitly authorial interventions” (e.g. *I contend...*, *The facts of the matter are that...*) and “intensifiers with clausal scope” (e.g. *really, indeed*) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 127). Examples from this corpus are:

26. The importance of the inclusion of learner perspectives in the teacher appraisal process ***certainly*** has relevance. (HW, 2010: 324)
27. ***It is my contention that*** such qualitative data represents more accurately the nature of the processes of educational change. (C, 2001: 282)

In example 26, the semantics of *certainly* construed the proposition about the importance of the inclusion of learner perspectives in the teacher appraisal as being grounded on the subjectivity of the writer and the reader or even members in the relevant discourse community. Any potentially contradicting view was thus being disfavored as the current position was presented as generally acknowledged. In example 27, the locution *it is my contention that* construes a compelling proposition by explicit authorial “insistings or emphasisingings” which imply the presence of some contrary voices and set the authorial voice against them (Martin & White, 2005, p. 128).

6.4.6 Endorse

Endorse is another dialogic contractive option in the sub-system of Proclaim which differs from Concur and Pronounce in the overt engagement with an external voice that is often construed as highly credible. By endorsing the external utterance, the authorial voice is positioned as in alignment with it and as sharing some responsibility for it, at which point Endorse differs from Distance and Acknowledge (see 6.4.7 & 6.4.8). Typical realizations of Endorse given in Martin and White (2005) are formulations such as “*the report demonstrates/shows/proves that...*” (p. 134). However, most examples in this corpus are in the form of reference to literature, which look very similar in appearance to formulations of the opposite dialogic expansive category of

Engagement: Attribute (see 5.2.2.5). Figure 6.4 shows a series of instances of Endorse in the current corpus. Although they appear similar to Engagement: Attribute in formulation, the reading of co-text indicated that the authorial voice is clearly associated with the attributed voice, as shown by the following two examples.

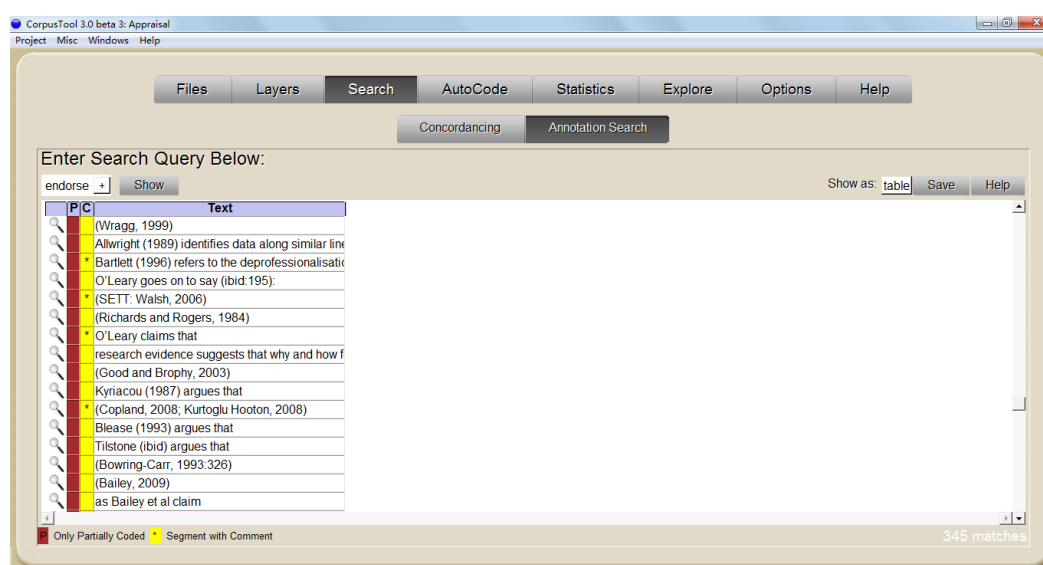


Figure 6.4 Examples of Endorse in the Current Corpus

28. ***Kyriacou (1987) argues that*** identifying incompetence has a negative impact on teachers who may want to use the feedback to discuss problems, and this is interesting when related to Hannah's perspective [5.3.2.3]. (HW, 2010: 316)
29. ***Dörnyei (2001a) claims that*** since teachers play the role of group leaders in class, their classroom behaviours may substantially determine the class spirit. This possibly explains why in the present study, the learners claimed that committed teachers may prompt them to become committed learners. (W, 2010: 199)

In example 28, the authorial voice indicated its support for Kyriacou's (1987) proposition by the positive evaluation *interesting* and thus the authorial

voice entered into a dialogic relationship of alignment with the attributed voice. As can be seen, even though this external utterance was not introduced into the text by reporting verbs of *show* and *prove* etc. as in Martin and White's (2005) examples, the authorial alignment with the attributed voice can be identified from the positive evaluation that lies outside the reported speech clause boundary. There are many instances like example 28 in this corpus, which were coded as Endorse but were not expressed by the typical realizations of Endorse explained in the work of Martin and White (2005) and White (2003; 2012). In fact, the attributed position in example 29 was also coded as Endorse, although it employed the reporting verb of *claim* which generally is seen as a realization of Distance (see 6.4.7). The reason is that the co-text indicated the attributed proposition as the possible explanation for the author's findings, which thereby seems to signal retrospectively the author as sharing responsibility for that proposition.

6.4.7 Distance

In contrast to Endorse, Distance is a dialogic expansive option within the sub-system of Engagement: Attribute, which marks the authorial voice as disaligned from the attributed position (Martin & White, 2005). As mentioned in 5.2.2.5, examples of Distance in Martin and White (2005) revolved mainly around Verbal Process by reporting verb *claim*, however, the linguistic

realizations of Distance were more varied in my data and their annotation most of the time cannot rely solely on a reporting verb. A few examples of Distance in this corpus, without the reading of their co-text, appeared to function as the other expansive option of Acknowledge or even the contractive option of Endorse, as displayed in the figure below (see Figure 6.4 for comparison).

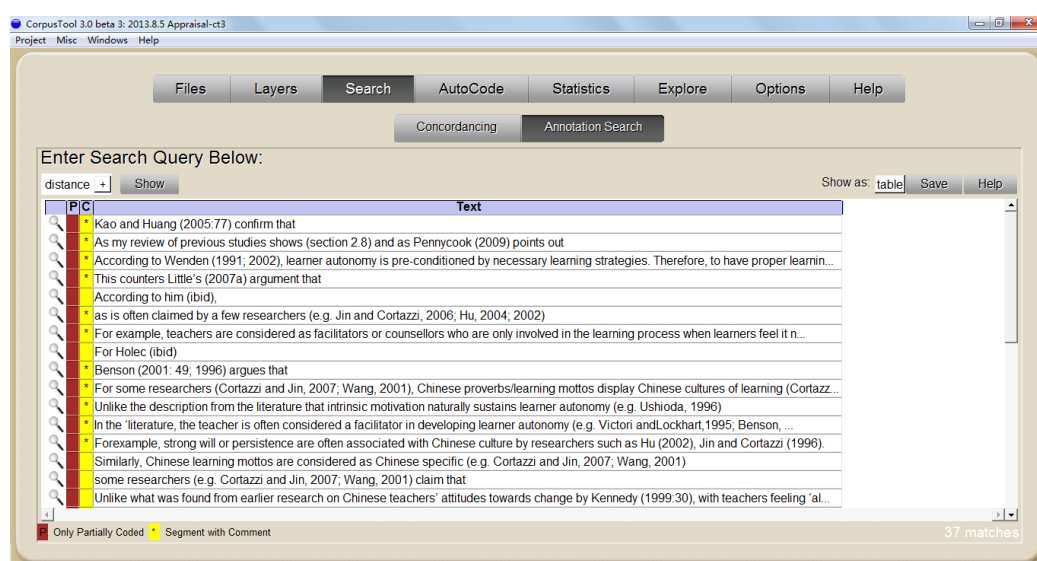


Figure 6.5 Examples of Distance in the Current Corpus

Nevertheless, when the co-text was taken into account, the semantics of these expressions actually worked towards positioning the authorial voice as disaligned with respect to the attributed voice, and consequently they were coded as Distance, for example:

30. ***Kao and Huang (2005:77) confirm that*** ‘English teachers in technological colleges can choose whatever materials they want to use in their English classes, [so] the contents and levels of textbooks used in technological colleges vary’. However, as described in section 6.2, the interview results I generated show that the teachers’ involvement in evaluating materials

varies, as the procedure for this varies from university to university and from individual to individual. (HG, 2011: 198)

31. *As indicated in the literature review (see 2.3), a basic reason for the inefficiency of CLT in China has been summarized by Hu (2002) as being that ideas advocated by CLT such as ‘learning-by-doing’ and equality between teacher and learner are in contradiction with Chinese teaching and learning culture, deeply influenced by Confucianism. But the findings showed that CLT is considered by certain participants as being fundamentally harmonious with the essence of Confucianism.* (X, 2009: 242)
32. When analysing the cases of Peggy and me, I found that our self-efficacy beliefs were not so much the results of our past teaching experiences, which is considered to be the principal source of efficacy information (*Bandura 1997:80*). Rather, our difference in self-efficacy beliefs was substantially influenced by our language teacher selves. (W, 2010: 186)
33. *The oppositional conceptions of the nature of the influence of a learner’s first language on his or her acquisition of/performance in a second or subsequent language highlighted earlier in Ellis (1994:343) and restated below provide a clear case in point:[...] To my mind, such accounts are crudely reductive, and seriously misrepresent a complex reality.* (M, 2012: 251)

From example 30 to 32, the authorial voice was presented as detached from the attributed voice (that was in italicized ***bold face***) according to the subsequent countering proposition signaled by *however*, *but*, and *rather*, respectively. One difference between the first two examples and example 32 lies in that the countering propositions in those two examples were reinforced as highly warrantable through the Pronounce option realized by *the interview results I generated show that* and *the findings showed that*, respectively, which acts to suppress alternative positions. However, in example 33, the up-scaled authorial

negative evaluation (*crudely reductive, and seriously misrepresent a complex reality*) of the attributed voice of *Ellis (1994)* indicates the author's clear disalignment with Ellis' (1994) proposition, and accordingly this example was coded as Distance.

In summary, although Martin and White (2005) argued that Distance is "most typically realised by means of the reporting verb, *to claim*" (p. 113), these four examples show a variety of linguistic realizations of Distance which were more specific to this genre. The explanations above also echo Martin and White (2005) that the rhetorical potential of a word such as *claim* "may vary systematically under the influence of different co-textual conditions, and across registers, genres and discourse domains" (p. 103). This again shows that assigning a linguistic item with an Appraisal feature has to depend on the reading of co-text. Another aspect worth mentioning is that although Distance may a common and good strategy in the domain of news reporting as it can shift the responsibility for a statement from the reporter to some external source and thus prevent the reporter from being accused, using Distance in the genre of thesis writing can be risky as it indicates the writer's clear disalignment from certain published knowledge. Under such a situation, it is important for writers to present their own proposition in a way that can shut off the potential challenge, that is, the strategic co-articulation with Distance (see 8.1.1).

6.4.8 Acknowledge

In addition to Distance, the other option in the Engagement: Attribute sub-system is Acknowledge, which also disassociates the authorial voice from the proposition being currently advanced. The two options are similar in the way that they both construe the authorial voice as actively engaging with an external voice and therefore both are dialogic expansive. However, they differ from each other in that semantics of Acknowledge positions the authorial voice as standing neutral with the external voice whereas semantics of Distance marks an overt intersubjectivity of disalignment.

As mentioned above, there are overlaps in the linguistic realizations of Acknowledge and Distance. The expressions of reference to literature may function as Acknowledge, Distance, or Endorse depending on whether the authorial voice is construed as standing neutral towards, disaligned from, or aligned with the attributed voice. In this genre, some forms of reference to literature were more easily to be identified as the Acknowledge option, for instance:

34. His pedagogical approach is *rule-bound and form-focused* (Raimes, 1991) which more closely aligns with the current-traditional rhetorical approach where “language and textual forms are central” (Johns, 1997a, p. 7). (G, 2008: 238-9)

This example represented one common realization of Acknowledge in the current day by borrowing terms from other researchers, which construed the text as engaging with prior relevant utterances in an ongoing communicative event. However, the authorial voice toward the attributed utterance stood intersubjectively neutral and therefore such expressions were coded as Acknowledge.

Other reference to literature that functions as Acknowledge in this data are shown in the following examples:

35. However, except for *Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979), who propose a post-use evaluation using the same checklist as for pre-use evaluation*, others do not provide concrete suggestions for in-use and post-use evaluation. (HG, 2011: 199)
36. *Previous studies have highlighted the potential benefit of understanding not only teachers' actual criteria for evaluating materials but also the reasons for different views (e.g. Tomlinson, 2003)*; however, to my knowledge, no studies have either systematically investigated teachers' actual criteria or the reasons for their criteria and their priorities. (HG, 2011: 209)
37. *There are concerns about observer training in the literature (Delamere, 1986; Kyriacou, 1987; Pennington, 1993; Tilstone, 1988; Walker and Adelman, 2003)* but the issue of teachers being observed by supervisors with no experience of relevant pedagogic practice (non-subject specialists, Kyriacou, *ibid*) would seem to be relatively recent. (HW, 2010: 318)
38. For example, *Shoaib and Dörnyei (2005) focus on* language learners' long-term motivational moves and shifts in their study (reviewed in 4.1.3.4). *Heckhausen (2000) and Smith and Spurling (2001) also adopt a broad lifespan perspective* aiming to frame motivational development. (L, 2007: 271)

Reference to literature in these four examples indicated the authors' awareness of prior work in their discipline and thus construed for the text a backdrop of multiple viewpoints. Such reference also presented the proposition being advanced as grounded in the subjectivity of the external voice rather than the internal authorial voice, which did not show overt aligned or disaligned positioning towards the attributed utterance.

In the data, there were also examples of ideas being sourced to external voices outside "the literature", which still seemed to function as Acknowledge, for example:

39. Since the society in Taiwan tends to value daytime students more and daytime programmes usually require higher scores in the university entrance exam than evening programmes, ***this is a common conception held by both teachers and the public in Taiwan.*** (W, 2010: 190)
40. In terms of internal influences, although the education system of Taiwan only requires Taiwanese citizens to have 12 years of education (i.e. until senior high school), ***the social standard considers university education to be compulsory.*** (W, 2010: 212)
41. ***Teachers are believed to be role models, learned and in control of knowledge by a majority of the people in the Chinese society*** although teachers themselves are becoming increasingly aware that they can no longer be in control of knowledge in the rapidly changing world of information technology. (WG, 2007: 239)

Although examples from 39 to 41 used references to society in general rather than to relevant literature, they also acted to attribute a proposition to an

external voice and thus construed for the text a heteroglossic communicative setting and implied the authors' tolerance of potential divergent views.

So far, the sections from 6.4.1 to 6.4.8 have explained the annotation of Appraisal options in this data, which are also illustrated in different genres in Martin and White (2005). The next section describes one option that emerged from the current data and seems to be more specific to the genre examined.

6.4.9 Justify-from-data

An important idea that needs to be stressed is that my research was grounded on Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal theory, but in a critical manner. By critical, I do *not* mean that I was judging the good or bad aspects of the theory, but mean that in light of the theory I went through my data and aimed at spotting any instance of language being used for an interpersonal function, whether or not it was categorized by Martin and White (2005). In other words, my analysis has an inductive as well as a deductive dimension, and is data sensitive. Through such analysis, there indeed emerged an additional option, which seems to be genre specific and was not classified by Martin and White (2005). This option was mainly employed by the thesis writers as they referred to their research data within discussion sections, which in a way was different from the simple data presentation in results sections. Reference to data used in discussion sections was often found to sustain an authorial argument (Bitchener & Basturkmen 2006;

Murray, 201; Oliver, 2004), which can be seen as assuming an interpersonal function to convince the reader.

The current study is by no means the first within the Appraisal tradition to identify new Appraisal options. For example, by a thorough analysis of undergraduate research papers and published research articles, Hood (2004) identified a new dimension to the system of Graduation: Force in Martin's (1997, 2000) model, on which her doctoral research was based. White (2012) also modified the system of Engagement in Martin and White (2005) by presenting a new dialogic contractive option of Justify in newspaper editorials. This option is typically realized by "connective such as *therefore* and related locutions" and functions to "present the speaker motivating the current propositions so as to win over those who might be dubious or resistant" (White, 2012, p. 64). For instance, "*The government has betrayed the people because it didn't maintain full employment*" (p. 65).

Both Hood's (2004) and White's (2013) proposal for new Appraisal option signaled that Martin and White's (2005) scheme is not to be considered as static, but rather as dynamic, which may be further developed when it is applied to exploring interpersonal language in a new discourse domain. In fact, the practice of justifying with reference to data was noticed during the pilot, but it was initially considered as belonging to the Acknowledge option given its function of

bringing in an external voice to the author's text and disassociating the authorial voice from the proposition being advanced. Such instances were labeled as "acknowledge (from data?)" as shown in the example below:

42. From what they wrote in the letters, I could see that they did struggle very much in deciding whether or not to come to my class and in fighting between their internal beliefs and external pressure. In Class 1, for example, **a student (S35, Class 1) found that** [engagement: attribute: acknowledge (from data?)] final-year students' (including herself) learning behaviours and purposes became very utilitarian. (L, 2007: 267)

However, the more I encountered similar instances the more it became clear that the use of reference to data generally showed a dialogic contractive function. The previous label thus may confuse the reader that this genre-specific option, as the Acknowledge option in Martin and White (2005), is dialogic expansive. For this reason, and inspired by White (2010), I labeled the option which emerged from my corpus as Justify-from-data in that their linguistic expressions also functioned to enhance the argumentative force of the proposition being advanced, in a similar way to the Justify option in White (2012).

Justify in this corpus was mainly employed by the thesis writers to refer to their own research data (i.e. interviews, questionnaires, and teaching journals) in order to support an authorial proposition that was presented preceding to this reference. For example:

43. Ms. Pai supplemented the textbook by teaching an element of writing called a “hook.” Mr. Sun supplemented the textbook when he taught students to write something he called a “bridge.” Students reported they were rather confused by the whole thing. *As one student commented*: “I write the hook in the Mr. Sun’s class, he said no, you can’t write this on it, so I think maybe it’s not a part of academic writing.” (G, 2008: 254)
44. Length was one condition for EAW; for some respondents, the length of the text was a necessary condition for a piece of writing to be EAW. While the length of a composition being a criterion for EAW is not, to my knowledge, discussed in current literature on second language writing, two teachers and a student during this study refer to it. For example, *the writing instructor Mr. Brown thought* the writing needed to be longer than a paragraph/page in order to be considered EAW. (G, 2008: 234)
45. The data suggested that inconsistency existed among these dimensions, for example, some students’ conceptions implied learner autonomy for communicative ability whereas their reported behaviours focused on self-directed learning for academic success (see Table 7-4). As shown in Table 7-4, *both interviewees 2 and 9 reported that* English language learning should aim at gaining communicative ability (see section 5.4), however, their reported behaviours (see section 4.4.1) are much oriented towards academic success. (J, 2008: 290)

Examples from 43 to 47 in one aspect acted similarly as Acknowledge to disassociate the authorial voice from the proposition being advanced. In the other aspect, they were employed to support the main authorial proposition expressed prior to the reference and thus reinforced the arguability of that proposition, which consequently enhanced the interpersonal cost of challenging that proposition and reduced the dialogic space for negotiation. Therefore, instances of reference to research data were classified as a new sub-category of the contractive Engagement system.

The three examples above represent typical realizations of Justify-from-data emerged from this corpus, which can be summarized as *a specific research participant + reporting verb* (e.g. example 45, *both interviewees 2 and 9 reported that...*). However, there also appeared other formulations that were used for the justifying function but whose form might appear more typical of results presentation. For example:

46. Findings of the present study indicate that teachers' immediacy behaviours are associated with learners' affect for the teachers and the intrinsic values learners attach to the course. *In 4.1.3.3, the target learners claimed that* caring and approachable teachers prompted them to generate positive affect for the teachers. *They also claimed that* teachers who were keen on interacting with them and who use a lively, funny way to teach may make learning more interesting and fun to them. (W, 2010: 200)
47. The findings also indicated the high degree to which the informants consider their intercultural experience to have been conducive to improving their teaching performance when they went back to teach in China from abroad in terms of CLT implementation and general teaching effectiveness. In general, *the overseas experience of teacher education overseas was commonly agreed as effective in* improving the overall quality of Chinese EFL practitioners academically, practically, ideologically, socioculturally and linguistically. (X, 2009: 246)

Example 46 showed a reference to a number of research participants while example 47 even did not give an exact reference; however, in terms of the co-text they functioned to support the authorial proposition being uttered prior to the reference so that they were still coded as Justify-from-data. A critical point that needs to be mentioned again is that assigning any span of text to a particular

Appraisal category is not simply by the form of language but is widely co-text and context based. As in example 48 below:

48. As he revealed his criteria for good writing, he did not seem to value the personal but rather displayed a lack of credence for the creative not in keeping with tenets of the Personal-Expressivists movement. When grading academic writing *Mr. Johnson said* he had “criteria that are much more rigid,” but creative writing “is the kind of writing that is not in any way challenging to grade okay. None whatsoever. You can sit down and do thirty papers in thirty minutes and still have time to drink a cup of coffee.” (G, 2008: 241)

The expression *Mr. Johnson said* is same to the typical realizations of Justify-from-data in form such as example 44, actually did not fulfill any justifying function. It was just a report of what Mr. Johnson said about grading academic writing and hence was coded as Bare Assertion, rather than Justify-from-data.

6.4.10 Up-scale and down-scale Graduation

Graduation is the third main category of Appraisal which can operate across Attitude and Engagement options discussed above. Resources of Graduation can raise or lower the degree of speakers/writers’ evaluation, or the degree of speakers/writers’ tolerance for possible alternative views in a communicative setting. For example:

49. The selection of the textbook is *extremely* important due to the quasi-syllabus/ curriculum status the textbook has. (G, 2008: 252)
50. These theoretical debates *never* come to a conclusion since no relevant research has been done. (J, 2008: 278)

In example 49, the up-scale option realized by *extremely* increased the author's positive evaluation of the selection of the textbook. In example 50, by use of *never*, the degree of the author's denial of the potential contrary view that such theoretical debate has come to a conclusion was raised, and the dialogic space for the contrary view was further closed down.

The whole section of 6.4 has explained all the decisions of assigning a stretch of interpersonal language to a particular Appraisal category. The next section presents the modified coding scheme and an excerpt of one text in the corpus with a full annotation of Appraisal options used.

6.5 The modified coding scheme

By the end of main coding, my coding scheme after the pilot, derived from Martin and White (2005) (see Figure 5.1) has been modified by adding a new genre-specific option emerged from my own corpus: the Justify-from-data category, shown in bold in Figure 6.6. In this figure, the symbols +/- and ↑/↓ are used to represent positive/negative Attitude and upscale/downscale Graduation, respectively.

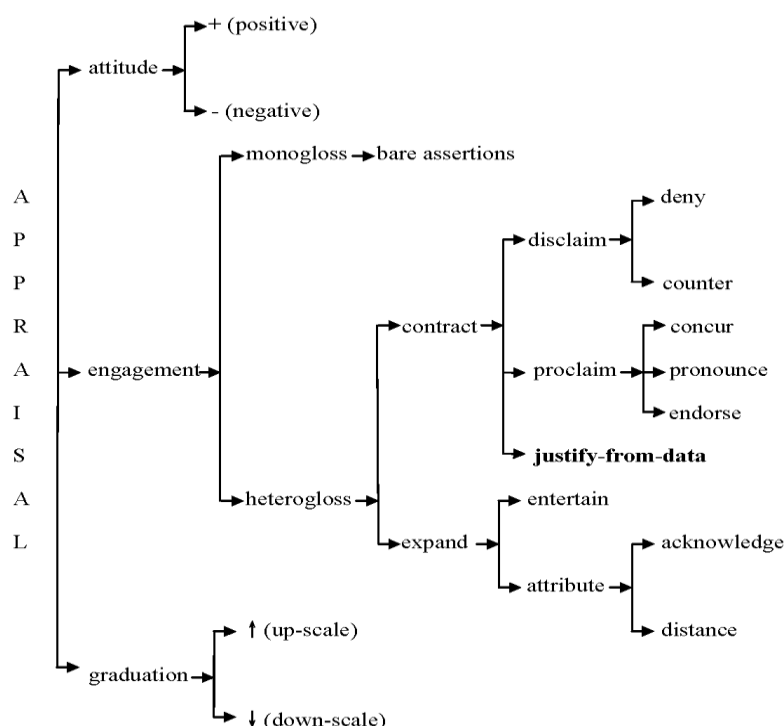


Figure 6.6 *Modified Coding Scheme after Main Coding*

The following excerpt is from the discussion section of J (2008) in which the author “aims to explore Chinese learners’ conceptions of learner autonomy from learners’ perspective” (p. XVII). It shows an example of text with annotations exported from the UAM CorpusTool. Different colors and word fonts were assigned to represent different Appraisal options:

- positive attitude
- negative attitude
- Graduation ↑
- Graduation ↓
- **Bare Assertion**
- Deny
- Counter
- Concur
- Pronounce
- Endorse
- Entertain
- Acknowledge
- Distance
- Justify-from-data

51. Although willingness is commonly recognized as a key component in learner autonomy (e.g. Little, 1991; Sinclair, 2000; Benson, 2001), there seems to be insufficient literature discussing adjusted attitude, for example, as mentioned by students in the present study. As a compulsory subject for

public examination, *English was a foreign language confronting Chinese students* at the beginning. Except for a few interviewees who: reported that they had a genuine interest in English at the beginning, *most of them had to adjust their attitude* towards English language learning. Under such circumstances, *a strong will was necessary* for them to carry out learning for academic survival. Moreover, **even** when students had interest in English and aimed at communicative ability, a strong will was also needed to sustain learning. **However**, caution should be exercised **not** to attribute these two components to Chinese traditional culture **as is often claimed by a few researchers (e.g. Jin and Cortazzi, 2006; Hu, 2004; 2002)**. (J, 2008: 282)

This paragraph discussed one aspect of a better understanding of conceptions of learner autonomy in Chinese context – the importance of strong will. At the beginning, the author engaged in the relevant literature by use of Acknowledge which introduced several prior researchers' views on willingness in learner autonomy. However, the co-articulation of this acknowledgment with the option of Counter realized by **although** construed this external voice as a countering expectation of the authorial voice, which positioned a negative Attitude (**insufficient**) towards the existing literature about adjusted attitude. Nevertheless, the author's use of Entertain (**seems to**) showed her awareness of possible alternative views on this issue within the community of her research field and her willingness to tolerate and negotiate with such positions. As a result, the author's risk of being challenged by potential opponents was reduced.

Following the first sentences, the authorial voice made assertions about the subject of English in China, students' attitude towards learning English, and the role of strong will in motivating students. The author's proposition about the

importance of willingness was advanced by using the countering item **even** to reject the normal expectation that students who are interested in English would not need a strong will. At the end, the author invoked an opposite view that students' awareness of a strong will is attributed to Chinese culture, but, only for the purpose of directly refuting this voice by the use of negation **not**. This denial also clearly suggested the author's disalignment from the view of those cited researchers (**Jin and Cortazzi, 2006; Hu, 2004; 2002**). The author's employment of the dialogic contractive option Denial suppressed the putative reader who may hold a contradicting opinion. The co-articulated dialogic expansive option, Distance, functioned to open up the space for alternative views a bit more by introducing external, contrary voice, but ultimately for disassociating the authorial voice from it.

The annotation of Appraisal features that occurred in this corpus provided the basis for comparison of their uses by the L1 Chinese and L1 English writers and for statistical tests to examine the significance of difference (see Chapter 7), which can answer research question 2.

Chapter 7 Quantitative results

This chapter presents some quantitative results obtained from the main coding. The first section presents descriptive results so as to summarize the proportions of Appraisal items that were observed in the whole corpus and then to compare these proportions across the two sub-corpora – one of L1 Chinese speakers and one of L1 English speakers. The second section presents statistical results in order to answer research question 2 about whether there is any systematic differences in the choice of Appraisal options made by L1 Chinese and L1 English speakers.

7.1 Descriptive statistics

7.1.1 Proportions of Appraisal features in the whole corpus

Figure 7.1 shows the descriptive statistics about the Appraisal items occurring in the whole corpus, generated by the UAM CorpusTool. The percentage of each feature in Figure 7.1 refers to the proportion of all Appraisal codings (n=7059) in the whole corpus. These results show an initial view of which aspects of Appraisal language are most frequent across the corpus and therefore, potentially, in the genre (including discipline and context) under study.

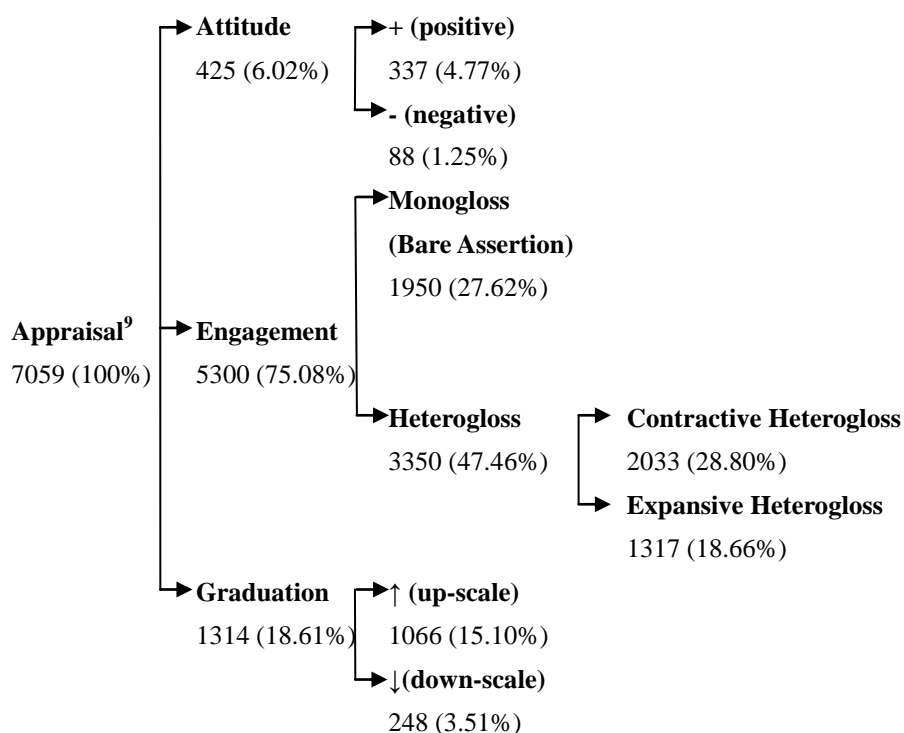


Figure 7.1 *The Number and Percentage of Appraisal Features in the Whole Corpus*

As the above figure shows, the total number of stretches of texts in the corpus which were coded with an Appraisal feature is 7059, within which the most frequently occurring category is Engagement (n=5300). Except for the 16 uncodable items (see footnote 9), Attitude (n=425) takes only 6.02% of the total Appraisals. This result is in accordance with what was found about Attitude in the pilot study, during which it was also the least frequently occurring option. These results also indicate that interpersonal language (i.e. evaluation of others' and the author's own research) in the genre examined was largely achieved by Engagement.

⁹ This number includes 16 instances of Uncodable items (0.23%).

Within Attitude, the negative category (n=337) is greatly outnumbered by the positive one (n=88), which indicates this group of writers' preference for making positive evaluations. This is similar to Liu and Thompson's (2009) finding about a tendency for positively encoded attitudinal values in argumentation.

Within Graduation, the number of up-scale (↑) ones (n=1066) is far more than that of down-scale (↓) ones (n=248), which indicates that these writers were more likely to intensify the degree of their evaluation. Within Engagement, the number of Monogloss (n=1950) is 27.62% of the total number of all Appraisal codings. It is a bit surprising that Monogloss still takes a quite large portion of discussion sections of doctoral theses, which generally require a fairly frequent engagement with the diversity of viewpoints in relevant discourse community. However, a qualitative look at those coded instances indicates that most were metalanguage, mostly including a summary of a section, cross-references to results that have been presented, and recounts of some relevant bits of teaching/learning tasks conducted in research.

Moreover, the much higher number of Engagement items and the wide range of contractive and expansive resources being found (see Figure 7.2 below) indicate the texts in this corpus were extensively dialogic and suggest the writers' awareness of the need to negotiate their propositions with prior utterances and with the imagined reader. Regarding Heterogloss, the number of contractive ones

(n=2033) is roughly 1.5 times more than that of expansive features (n=1317).

This is the opposite of the observations of more expansive features than contractive ones in Fryer's (2013) corpus of medical research articles and in Swain's (2010) corpus of undergraduate discussion essays. This contrasting preference for heteroglossic resources appears to be very interesting. The previous review (see 2.4) of the impact of disciplinary epistemological practice on the use of interpersonal language indicated a tendency to make tentative propositions in soft disciplines as required by the characteristics of knowledge as being "qualitative and reiterative" (Becher, 1990, p. 335). Therefore, it may have been assumed that the current data from ELT/Applied Linguistics, which can be seen as belonging to a soft-applied discipline according to Becher's (1994) grouping, will show more uses of expansive than contractive resources. However, in reality, the latter was more frequently employed.

Figure 7.2 shows the proportions of sub-categories of expansive or contractive sub-system that were employed in this corpus. Again, the percentage of each feature given in this figure refers to the proportion of all Appraisal codings in the whole corpus.

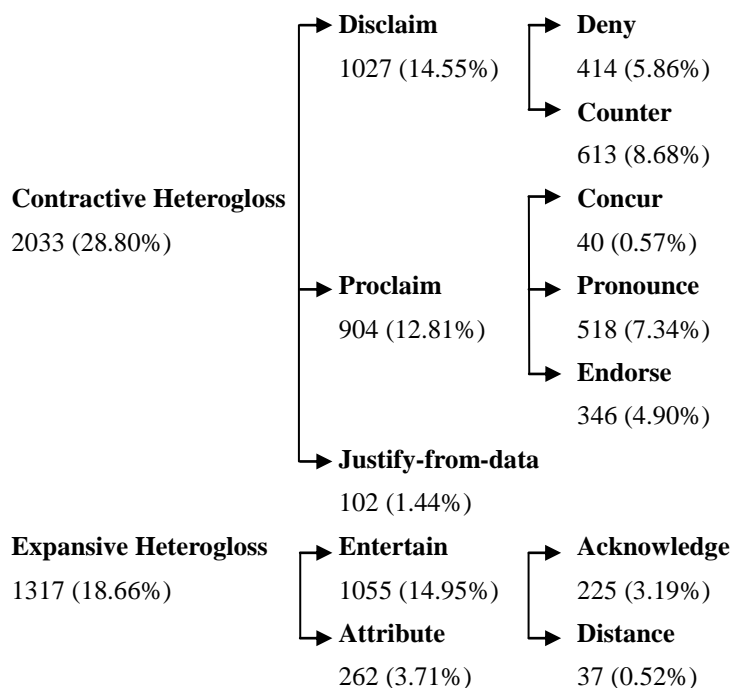


Figure 7.2 *The Number and Percentage of Heterogloss Features in the Whole Corpus*

Figure 7.2 shows that, within contractive Heterogloss, the number of Disclaim (n=1027) is slightly higher than that of Proclaim (n=904), suggesting a balanced use between the two options. The genre specific option Justify-from-data was least frequently used with only 102 number of occurrence. Within expansive Heterogloss, there appeared to be an unbalanced use between Entertain and Attribute, as the former occurred 1055 times whereas the latter only 262 times. This result suggests that the 12 writers preferred using realizations of Entertain when they intended to open up dialogic space for other potentially diverse views. This great number of Entertain option also suggests the 12 writers' awareness of alternative views and the imagined reader who holds such views. In fact, Entertain was also the most frequently used option in the whole heteroglossic

system, which corresponds to Fryer's (2013) finding that Entertain had the highest frequency of occurrence in medical research articles and showed the highest density in discussion sections of those articles. Swain (2010) also identified Entertain as the most widely used option in discussion essays written by undergraduate students. All these findings seem to suggest that Entertain is prevalent in academic discourse no matter whether written by novice or experienced writers.

There is also an unbalanced use between the two options in Attribute sub-system, in which the ratio of Distance (n=37) to Acknowledge (n=225) is about 1:6. Distance was also identified as being the lowest in the order of preference in Swain's (2010) corpus. This option was also rare in Coffin's (2009) data of the introduction and one analysis chapter of a doctoral thesis from Film Studies and even not found in Fryer's (2013) corpus. This sparse use of Distance in the current corpus may imply a relatively low number of different findings between the 12 authors' own and other research. However, it may also imply these writers' hesitation about explicitly criticizing the published findings due to the potential risk of being challenged or refuted by the reader. The qualitative findings of implicit disalignment from previous work realized by the co-articulation of Acknowledge and other Appraisal options (mainly Bare Assertion and Entertain) seems to support this assumption as well (see 8.1.2).

Therefore, it is beneficial to look at how these writers managed to avoid such risk when they actually employed Distance, which is presented in the qualitative results (see 8.1.1).

Within the sub-system of Proclaim, the number of Concur (n=40) is far less than that of Pronounce (n=518) and Endorse (n=346). In fact, with a reference to Figure 7.1, Concur was even the least frequently used option within the whole Appraisal system. Similar results were noted in Fryer (2013) which found few examples of Concur across the corpus of medical research articles and in Swain (2010) which found Concur was quite low in the order of preference across both the high-score and low-score undergraduate discussion essays. In the present corpus, the underuse of Concur possibly indicates that the 12 writers may be unaware of this option for making interpersonal meanings or that these writers' inventory of linguistic realizations of Concur may be small. Both cases suggest the need to raise novice writers' awareness of this option, especially given the focus on modal verbs and adverbs as means of interpersonal expressions in many guidebooks (see 2.4 & 2.6)

So far, the section has described the proportions of Appraisal features used in the *whole* corpus. The next section presents comparisons of Appraisal features across the two sub-corpora based on the normalized frequencies. These

normalized frequencies show an initial view of the differences in each coded Appraisal feature and serve as the basis for further statistical test (see 7.2).

7.1.2 Comparisons of Appraisal features across sub-corpora

Raw counts of Appraisal features in the two sub-corpora of different size need to be normalized for the purpose of meaningful comparison. Biber and Jones (2009) argued that the normalized basis should be approximate to or at least should not be higher than the average length of text in a corpus, in order to avoid the count of a rare feature becoming “artificially inflated” (p. 1299). In the current study, the average length of text in the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpus is 9,039 and 10,790, respectively. However, some texts are much shorter than the average, for example X (2009) has only 4,859 words. I therefore decided to be cautious and chose per 1,000 words as a basis for normalization, which is also a commonly adopted basis in other research that used corpora of similar size of my two sub-corpora. Figure 7.3 shows comparisons of Appraisal options per 1,000 words across the two sub-corpora.

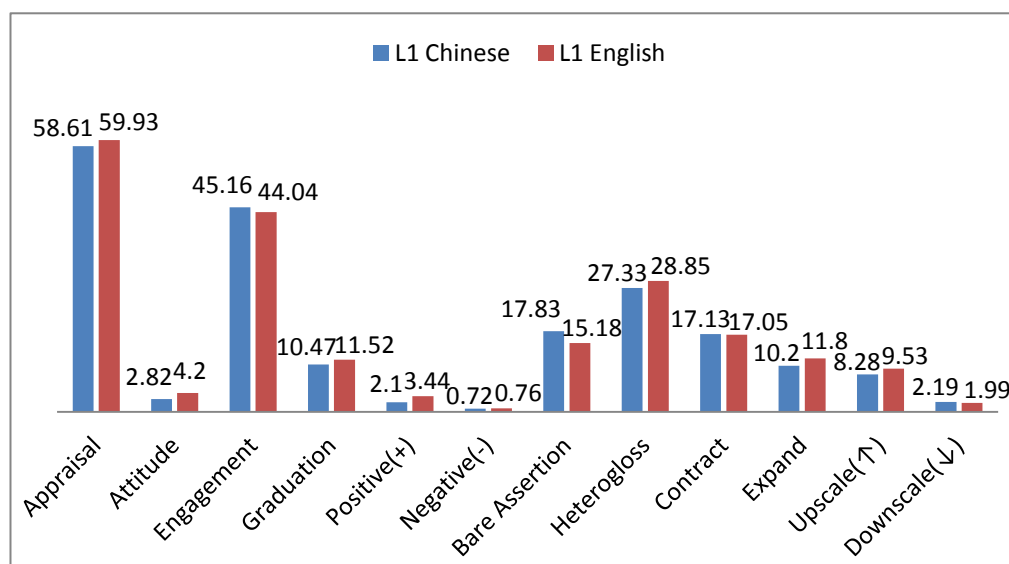


Figure 7.3 *Normalized Frequencies (per 1,000 words) of Appraisal Features across Two Sub-corpora*

Overall, the L1 Chinese and L1 English writers drew on the same range of Appraisal systems, which suggests a similar awareness of a variety of Appraisal options available for manipulating interpersonal meanings in thesis writing.

Figure 7.3 also shows that both groups of writers employed roughly the same number of all categories of Appraisal features per 1,000 words and that Engagement was the most frequently used option across the two sub-corpora. In this L₁C and L₁E sub-corpus, Appraisal occurred at a frequency of approximately 58.61 and 59.93 times per 1,000 words, respectively, which is a little higher than the frequency of Appraisal (37 per 1,000 words) in Fryer's (2013) corpus of research articles (p. 194).

Within Engagement, heteroglossic options were more often used than the monoglossic option (Bare Assertion) across both sub-corpora, although the

difference between the numbers of Bare Assertion and Heterogloss in the L₁C corpus (n=9.5) is smaller than such difference in the L₁E corpus (n=13.67). This result suggests that the L1 English writers seemed to be more conscious of engaging with alternative voices than did L1 Chinese writers. Within Heterogloss, as shown on Figure 7.3, the ratio of Contract options in the L₁C sub-corpus (n=17.13) to that in the L₁E sub-corpus (n=17.05) is almost 1:1, so is the ratio of Expand options in the L₁C sub-corpus (n=10.2) to that in the L₁E sub-corpus (n=11.8). These two results suggest that the two groups of writers displayed similar preference for the two systems which they used to create their texts as acknowledging both divergent and convergent views in the communication.

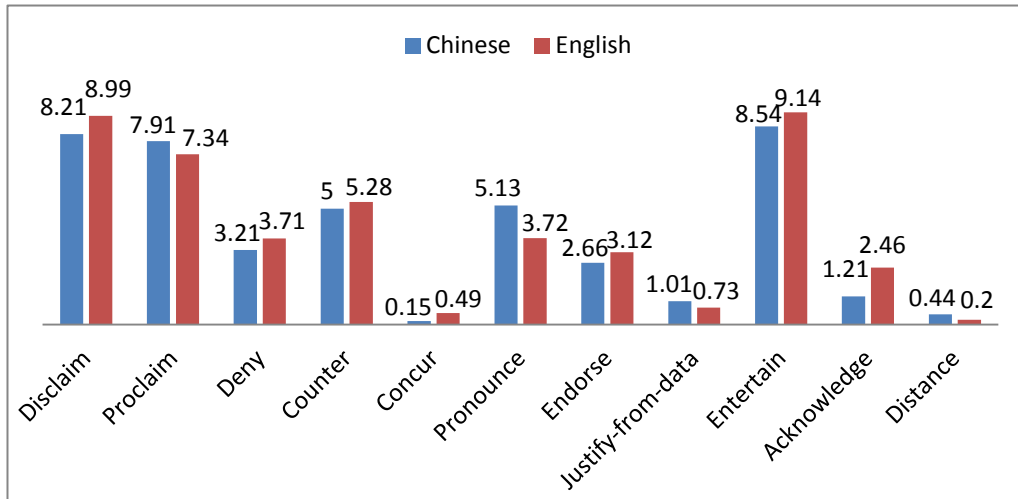


Figure 7.4 Normalized Frequencies (per 1,000 words) of Sub-categories of Heterogloss across Two Sub-corpora

Within the contractive system, Figure 7.4 further shows that Disclaim was preferred to Proclaim by both the L1 Chinese and L1 English writers, which

corroborates Lancaster's (2014) finding that Disclaim rather than Proclaim was the more frequently used contractive option in his data of four argumentative texts in Economics. Additionally, the difference in frequency between these two options is larger ($n=1.65$) in the L₁E sub-corpus than that ($n=0.3$) in the L₁C sub-corpus. As for the expansive resources, Entertain was the most frequently employed option by both the L1 Chinese and L1 English writers, which is in contrast to some previous findings that Chinese writers favored intensified assertions in argumentative essays (Chen, 2010; Hu & Cao, 2014; Hyland & Milton, 1997). On the other hand, Concur was the least frequently used option in the L₁C sub-corpus whereas Distance was the least frequent one in the L₁E sub-corpus. The number of Distance per 1,000 words in the L₁C sub-corpus ($n=0.44$) is more than two times of that in the L₁E one ($n=0.2$). The finding that the L1 Chinese writers used more Distance appears to be surprising, considering the author's explicit disaligning stance towards other published researchers and the L1 Chinese students' general reluctance to critique (Hood, 2004; Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006).

In addition to Distance, Figure 7.4 also shows that the L1 Chinese writers used more Pronounce and Justify-from-data than did the L1 English writers, but the former group used less of the rest of heteroglossic options than did the latter group. The L1 Chinese writers' preference for Pronounce indicates that, compared

with their counterparts, they seemed to be more inclined to directly intervene in the text by presenting themselves as responsible for the proposition being advanced, resulting in a less strong authority. Similar result was reflected in Wu's (2007) finding about the lower-rated geography undergraduates' preference to Pronounce than Endorse and Disclaim (Deny/Counter) options when making claims. The L1 Chinese writers' more frequent use of Justify-from-data further suggests that they seemed to prefer using reference to the research participants' voice to support their assertions. In contrast, the L1 English writers' more frequent use of Endorse seems to indicate that this group of writers preferred referring to literature for the support of authorial assertions.

All the comparisons above have shown differences in using some Appraisal options by the two groups of writers. In order to determine whether these differences are statistically significant, the Mann-Whitney U test was conducted, results of which are presented in the next section.

7.2 Inferential statistics

The selection of the Mann-Whitney test is based on two principles which Gries (2014) suggested: the type of study being conducted and the type of variables involved. The quantitative strand of the current research aims at comparing two data sets, which are Appraisal options used in texts by L1 Chinese writers and those in texts by L1 English writers. The two sets are

independent in that there is no relationship between the observations of the use of Appraisal options in each of the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpora or between the two sub-corpora. Therefore, the current research suits what Biber and Jones (2009) call a type of study which is designed to describe the “differences among texts and text varieties” (p. 1290). Each text is treated as “an observation,” and the “rates of occurrence” of linguistic features are interval variables that can be subjected to inferential statistics (p. 1290).

As the present corpus has a relatively small number of texts, a non-parametric test is appropriate in that it does not assume a normal distribution of data (Field, 2009; Oakes, 1998). The Mann-Whitney U test, as the non-parametric test for two independent samples, therefore is chosen to examine whether the observed differences in the relative frequencies (per 1,000 words, see 7.1.2) of Appraisal options used by L1 Chinese and L1 English writers are statistically significant. The null hypothesis predicts that there is no statistically significant difference in the use of Appraisal options by these two groups of writers, and a two-tailed Mann-Whitney test ($p < 0.05$) was run on all data sets to examine the hypothesis.

Table 7.1 *The Mann-Whitney Test Result of Appraisal*

Ranks				
L1		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Normalized	L1C	6	6.17	37.00
frequency of	L1E	6	6.83	41.00
appraisal	Total	12		

Test Statistics ^a	
	Normalized frequency of appraisal
Mann-Whitney U	16.000
Wilcoxon W	37.000
Z	-.320
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.818

a. Grouping Variable: First language

Overall, the null hypothesis was confirmed with a 95% degree of certainty. As can be seen from Table 7.1, the test result showed that the normalized frequency of Appraisal in the L₁C sub-corpus (*Mdn* = 59.30) did not differ significantly from that in the L₁E sub-corpus (*Mdn* = 62.48), *U* = 16.00, *p* = 0.818, *r* = -0.09. However, this result should be interpreted as indicating that no statistically significant difference was found in the current corpus rather than that the two groups of writers represent a similar population in terms of using Appraisal. This needs to be examined in further research by including more samples from each group. This result is also at odds with many previous studies which observed differences in using interpersonal language by L1 Chinese and L1 English writers who were at a lower education level (e.g. Chen, 2010; Hinkel, 1997, 2003; Hyland & Milton, 1997). It therefore can be assumed that as

language proficiency increases and experience in academic education accumulates L1 Chinese writers, at least those in this study, have taken good command of making interpersonal meanings in thesis writing. This positive result also indicates that perhaps at this higher level of education the first language would not be a constraint on using devices for making interpersonal meanings.

Similarly, the L1 Chinese writers did not differ significantly from the L1 English writers in the use of the two main categories of Appraisal – Attitude and Graduation. Table 7.2 presents the inferential results about the comparisons of the normalized frequencies of Attitude and Graduation between the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpora, respectively.

Table 7.2 *The Mann-Whitney Test Results of Attitude and Graduation*

Ranks				
	L1	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Normalized frequency of attitude	L1C	6	5.33	32.00
	L1E	6	7.67	46.00
	Total	12		
Normalized frequency of graduation	L1C	6	6.17	37.00
	L1E	6	6.83	41.00
	Total	12		

Test Statistics ^a		
	Normalized frequency of attitude	Normalized frequency of graduation
Mann-Whitney U	11.000	16.000
Wilcoxon W	32.000	37.000
Z	-1.121	-.320
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.310	.818

a. Grouping Variable: First language

Table 7.2 shows that the normalized frequencies of Attitude and Graduation in the L₁C sub-corpus (*Mdn* = 2.20 and 12.37, respectively) did not differ significantly from those in the L₁E sub-corpus (*Mdn* = 4.43 and 12.35, respectively), *U* = 11.00 and 16, *p* = 0.310 and 0.818, *r* = -0.32 and -0.09, respectively. The statistical test also confirmed that there is no significant difference in the use of Bare Assertions and Heterogloss by the L1 Chinese writers and the L1 English writers, *U* = 10.00 and 17, *p* = 0.240 and 0.937, *r* = -0.37 and -0.05, respectively (see Table 7.3 below). As reviewed in 3.2, Swain's (2010) research showed that non-native undergraduates generally experienced more difficulty with effective deployment of Engagement resources. However, the present finding indicated that doctoral students at least those in this study seemed to show similar rhetorical behavior in using Engagement particularly in terms of the relative frequency. Furthermore, the similar use of Heterogloss seems to indicate both groups of writers' awareness of engaging with the reader and construing dialogic divergences for their texts.

Table 7.3 *The Mann-Whitney Test Results of Bare Assertion and Heterogloss*

Ranks				
	L1	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Normalized frequency of bare assertion	L1C	6	7.83	47.00
	L1E	6	5.17	31.00
	Total	12		
Normalized frequency of heterogloss	L1C	6	6.33	38.00
	L1E	6	6.67	40.00
	Total	12		

Test Statistics ^a		
	Normalized frequency of bare assertion	Normalized frequency of heterogloss
Mann-Whitney U	10.000	17.000
Wilcoxon W	31.000	38.000
Z	-1.281	-.160
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.240	.937

a. Grouping Variable: First language

One more interesting finding to note is the Mann-Whitney test result of the use of Pronounce across the two sub-corpora, as shown in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 *The Mann-Whitney Test Results of Pronounce*

Ranks				
	L1	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Normalized	L1C	6	8.33	50.00
frequency of	L1E	6	4.67	28.00
pronounce	Total	12		

Test Statistics ^a	
	Normalized frequency of pronounce
Mann-Whitney U	7.000
Wilcoxon W	28.000
Z	-1.761
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.093

a. Grouping Variable: First language

Although the difference in the relative frequency of Pronounce between the L1C and L1E sub-corpus is non-significant, the probability ($p = 0.093$) is the least among all the Mann-Whitney results of other Appraisal categories and is closest to the critical p-value 0.05. This result seems to be understandable considering that Pronounce functions to make propositions with high authorial

emphasis and that L1 Chinese writers tended to use intensified assertions as reported by some previous studies (e.g. Chen, 2010; Hyland & Milton, 1997). Pronounce was also reported to be accounting for the lower score of undergraduate argumentative essays in Wu's (2007) study as frequent use of Pronounce appeared to result in a sense of highly insisting on the validity of one's proposition and even some unwarranted assertiveness. Therefore, it would be useful to test if the difference becomes significant when more samples are included for comparison in future research.

Chapter 8 Qualitative results and discussion

The descriptive and inferential data presented above are of value to provide answers to research questions 1 and 2 (see 1.4) regarding what categories of Appraisal these 6 L1 Chinese and 6 L1 English writers used and whether there are any statistically significant differences in the two sets of writers' use of Appraisal options. However, a perhaps more central aim of this study is to explore how the 12 writers discussed their research findings by means of a certain Appraisal option or combination of certain options (see research question 3 in 1.4). In other words, it is one thing to know which Appraisal options are more frequently employed in the whole corpus or across the two sub-corpora. However, it is another thing to discover in what ways these options were deployed by the writers to create arguments about their own findings in relation to previous literature.

To explore how writers in the current corpus managed to achieve this rhetorical purpose, this section closely examines the most frequently recurring co-articulations of Appraisal options which were used across a stretch of text to refer to relevant literature and the writers' propositions about their own findings. Naturally, the length of a given text span will affect the number of Appraisal options used in that stretch and therefore the types of co-articulations observed.

Therefore, the principle adopted in the qualitative analysis of co-articulations of Appraisal options is to select the minimum length of a stretch of text that can represent the author's point of discussion which involves both references to previous literature and to their own findings. This is in some ways similar to the principle for selecting a span of language to code as a particular Appraisal option (see 6.2), in that it takes the minimum stretch that can carry the meaning and function. It is admitted that the selection involved certain degree of subjectivity and interpretation. However, this is inevitable in the process of qualitative analysis, and this principle at least has provided me with a guideline to conduct analysis as consistently as possible.

The next two sections present the analysis of the co-articulations of Appraisal options that function to position the author's findings against previous literature (see 8.1) and analysis of Appraisal options that function to make claims about their findings (see 8.2), respectively. It has to be pointed out that in actual writing the two aspects are interwoven as shown in all the examples in section 8.1. However, for clearer presentation, they are explained in two separate sections each with a particular focus of discussion – firstly the use of the three basic options (Distance, Acknowledge, and Endorse) for setting up the context of previous literature and secondly the use of the two basic options (Pronounce and Entertain) for putting forward propositions about one's own findings.

8.1 Positioning authors' findings in the context of previous literature

It was argued in Chapter 2 that a major challenge to writing discussion sections is to critically position the author's own findings against a wider literature in an appropriate way. This demanding task mainly involves two interrelated aspects of writing, that is, to set up a backdrop for discussion by bringing relevant sources to discussion sections so as to evaluate these sources from the viewpoint of their relation to writers' own findings, and to interpret the implications and significance of writers' own findings. One good indication of writers' effective management of this task is whether their theses have successfully passed the examination. Examination success suggests the acceptance of their practice by members of discourse community and thus could imply the conformity of their practice to disciplinary conventions. It is for this reason that patterns of interpersonal language utilized to fulfil this task in the current corpus can be seen as effective or at least appropriate use. Moreover, the frequency of occurrence of interpersonal options and co-articulations of these options identified in the corpus can be another important indication of the appropriateness or effectiveness of the 12 writers' use of interpersonal language to present their own findings and make connection between them and previous findings. Nevertheless, it is still hope that the frequent patterns of interpersonal

language identified in this corpus can be pedagogically helpful to solve the novice writer's difficulty in taking an evaluative stance towards literature and presenting the implications of their findings with an appropriate degree of commitment and certainty. Some researchers linked this difficulty to the impact of L1 rhetoric that discourages critical voice (e.g. Cadman 1997), but others posed the equally possible reason of having less awareness of the genre expectation and the range of interpersonal language available for taking a stance (e.g. Bloor & Bloor; Paltridge, 2002; Swales, 2004). As argued in 3.1, Appraisal theory systematically maps various semantic categories with their interpersonal functions, among which Engagement particularly concerns the interaction between the authorial voice and the external voice. In this corpus, Engagement was also shown as the most frequently employed category. Its three sub-categories of Distance, Acknowledge, and Endorse allow writers to relate their own findings to previous literature and signal their intersubjective positioning towards literature as disalignment, neutral, or alignment. Coffin (2009) also analyzed these three types of writer stance towards referenced source in the introduction and the analysis chapter of a doctoral thesis and discussed the rhetorical effects of different writer stance in the two sections.

In discussing the systemic representation of Appraisal meanings, Martin and White (2005) argued that it can be useful to “interpret some systems as

scaled” rather than as categorical and thus described the values of modality as “being located along a continuous scale extending from ‘low’ to ‘high’, with various intermediate points possible between these two extremes” (p. 16). White (2001c) also proposed the potential for seeing Engagement resources as “lying along a cline between most contracting (Disclaim) and most expanding (endorsement-neutral Attribution)” (p. 10). Based on the previous scholarship, it can be argued that the three types of writer stance locate on a continuum from Distance through Acknowledge to Endorse, the two extreme ends of which signal strong authorial disalignment and alignment.

The following sections present the qualitative analysis of the deployment of Distance, Acknowledge, and Endorse in this corpus together with examples and focus on explaining how they functioned to help writers establish a backdrop of relevant literature that is different from or similar to their own findings, which is commonly considered as the major communicative purpose of discussion sections (see 2.5).

8.1.1 Arguing against previous literature – co-articulations with Distance

This section discusses the most frequent co-occurrences of Distance and other Appraisal options by which the 12 authors argued against different findings from previous research and promoted their own findings. The qualitative analysis

of the 37 items of Distance noted a remarkable tendency for explicitly signaling authorial disalignment from previous literature by means of a range of other Appraisal options including: Counter (n=15, e.g. *however, instead*), Deny (n=3, e.g. *no, not*), Counter and Deny (n=3, e.g. *However...not...*), negative Attitude (n=5, e.g. *problematic, detrimental*), Counter and negative Attitude (n=2, e.g. *However, this often neglects different stages of learning...*) and semantic contrast (n=6, e.g. *different from..., of a contrast with...*). The fact that the items of Distance without signal are outnumbered by those with signal suggests that when the 12 authors engaged with different findings from other research they preferred to explicitly indicate their disalignment.

There are only 2 instances of Distance in which there was no such clear signal. In example 52, it can be seen that the author seemed to disalign herself from the previous view on cultural issues in materials evaluation as implied by the author's different finding that was pronounced in the co-text. However, the lack of signal can to a large extent increase difficulty for the reader, or at least for me as an analyst of the data, to identify the author's positioning towards the attributed source. This finding seems to echo Hood's (2005) observation of unclear phase boundaries causing difficulty interpreting authorial attitude in research papers produced by undergraduates (see 3.2). Furthermore, the absence of signal can make it difficult to recognize the author's purpose for citing the

source in such cases, which may cause the commonly reported problem of lacking evaluative attitude towards the work being cited in novice writers' texts (see 2.5). From a pedagogical perspective, it can be beneficial to make students aware of the examples of Distance without signal for authorial stance and make them compare such examples with those with an explicit signal. Therefore, the students can explore the more effective way of using the option of Distance when they try to argue against previous literature and discuss their new findings.

52. **As my review of previous studies shows (section 2.8) and as Pennycook (2009) points out**, conventional approaches to materials evaluation have tended to avoid cultural issues. **Data from my investigation showed that** Taiwanese teachers welcome the input from both foreign and local cultures (section 6.1.6) rather than avoiding cultural issues. (HG, 2011: 207)

As explained in 5.2.2.5 and 6.4.7, Distance makes the authorial voice step back from the proposition being advanced and presents it as explicitly disassociating from that proposition. While this disassociation can help to exempt the author from taking responsibility for the attributed proposition and thus from being potentially challenged by others, in the genre of doctoral theses, the explicit mark of disalignment from other published views and sometimes even dominant views in a discipline can be risky for writers as they may be questioned about their different views. Therefore, it is crucial for writers to make their own propositions appealing to at least the examiners and perhaps members of relevant discourse community when their theses get published in future.

In the current corpus, the qualitative analysis of the co-occurrences with the items of Distance found that the most frequent combination was Distance and Pronounce (n=22), compared to the less frequent combinations of Distance and Endorse (n=7) and Distance and Entertain (n=9). These results showed that contractive resources (Pronounce and Endorse) were more favored than expansive resources (Entertain) when these writers positioned different findings or views against the previous ones from which they disaligned. This preference for contractive options seems to be reasonable based on their function to close down the dialogic space by increasing the “interpersonal cost of any rejection/doubting” of authorial propositions in the ongoing communication (White, 2001c, p. 5). The rest of this section presents some examples of different types of co-articulations with Distance and explains how the authors disassociated themselves from previous views and then emphasized their own view.

Example 53 presents the co-articulation of Distance and Pronounce and that of Distance and Entertain. In this example, the author discussed new findings about the use of CLT approach (Communicative Language Teaching) in Chinese universities.

53. **As indicated in the literature review (see 2.3), a basic reason for the inefficiency of CLT in China has been summarized by Hu (2002) as being that** ideas advocated by CLT such as ‘learning-by-doing’ and equality between teacher and learner are in contradiction with Chinese

teaching and learning culture, deeply influenced by Confucianism. **But the findings showed that** CLT is considered by certain participants as being fundamentally harmonious with the essence of Confucianism. In addition, **unlike what was indicated in the literature review that the constraints of CLT are mainly at cultural level, the findings suggested that** the major constraints of CLT seem to be more at technical and ideological levels instead. (X, 2009: 242)

The author first referred to previous researcher Hu (2002) who argued the contradiction between the principles of CLT and Chinese teaching and learning culture; however, the author explicitly showed her disalignment from Hu's (2002) view by use of Counter (**But**). She then promoted her own finding via Pronounce (**the findings showed that...**), which reduced the dialogic space for others questioning the authorial proposition. The author continued to refer to previous literature that attributed the constraints of CLT to Chinese culture, but did this in order to distance herself from this view, as signaled by the semantic contrast (**unlike**). She then presented the opposite view that the constraints of CLT are more at technical and ideological levels but construed this authorial view as "located in some individual subjectivity, in some individual assessment of likelihood or of the available evidence" (White, 2001c, p.6) by means of Entertain (**the findings suggested that...**). In contrast to the smaller dialogic space for alternative views created by Pronounce as used in the first part of example 53, this use of Entertain expanded such space for potential disagreement.

Example 54 is from a thesis aimed at exploring Chinese students' conceptions of learner autonomy. The following excerpt was set out to discuss one aspect of learner autonomy as a capacity to take responsibility for learning.

54. Third, the ability to find appropriate methods... **According to Wenden (1991; 2002), learner autonomy is pre-conditioned by necessary learning strategies. Therefore, to have proper learning strategies is seen as compulsory to the capacity for learner autonomy. However, with a further examination of the data, it was revealed that** what often happened was not that students did not have the capacity to know or to use certain learning methods but that they tended to become suspicious of the usefulness of their methods if they did not see the expected learning efficiency. (J, 2008: 277)

The author made reference to Wenden's (1991, 2002) proposition about the necessity of having learning strategies for achieving learner autonomy, but for the purpose of disaligning herself from that view, which is signaled by Counter (**However**). Presenting Wenden's proposition paved the way for the author's own argument to be developed later, which was construed by Pronounce (**with a further examination of the data, it was revealed that...**) as valid and compelling and thus reducing the possibility of rejection from the reader.

In some other cases, Endorse was used to promote authorial assertion which contradicted previous research. Functioning similarly to Pronounce, Endorse seeks to suppress potential disagreement by construing the authorial assertion as highly warrantable by use of an "authority source" in the relevant discourse community (White, 2001d, p.5). Example 55 is from the same thesis as

example 54, in which the author tried to argue for a reconsideration of the current conceptions of learner autonomy according to her research findings.

55. ...caution should be taken to avoid another type of essentialist view, that is to overgeneralize so called ‘cultural particularity’. **For example, strong will or persistence are often associated with Chinese culture by researchers such as Hu (2002), Jin and Cortazzi (1996). Similarly, Chinese learning mottos are considered as Chinese specific (e.g. Cortazzi and Jin, 2007; Wang, 2001)** before an appropriate comparative study is undertaken. As discussed in section 7.2.3 and 7.4.5, the present study provides **no** evidence for such a claim. **Instead, the present study supports a contextualized understanding of concepts of learner autonomy that is suggested by researchers such as Aoki (2001) and Palfreyman (2003a)...**(J, 2008: 308)

The author first pointed out her proposition about avoiding taking the essentialist view of overgeneralizing cultural particularity. Then the author made specific references to other researchers who currently hold that type of essentialist view but indicated her disalignment from those researchers by denying (**no**) that there is supporting evidence from her own study and by introducing a countering view (**Instead**). This view was presented as being shared by the author and the researchers Aoki (2001) and Palfreyman (2003a) in the relevant discourse community, which thereby refuted the potentially different voices.

The next excerpt shows the use of negative Attitude (**sweeping**) as signal for the authorial disalignment from the previous views that was attributed to Hu (2002, 2005).

56. More importantly, *the emerging thoughts that CLT can be seen as fundamentally harmonious with Confucianism critically challenges* the sweeping assessment presented by Hu (2002, 2005) that cultural resistance has served as a key factor in hindering CLT promotion in the Chinese EFL setting. This means, according to insights provided by some informants (such as Sam, Mary, Daisy, Judy, and Patrick), that the constraints of CLT implementation in the Chinese tertiary EFL context are mainly at a technical level (namely, lack of proficiency in English) rather than at a broad cultural level. (X, 2009: 260)

After distancing herself from Hu's (2002, 2005) view, the author strongly argued for a different view that Chinese culture does not hinder CLT implementation. Instead of asserting this new proposition by means of Pronounce or Endorse as shown in examples 54 and 55, the author chose to construe it as warrantable as being supported by research data (according to insights provided by some informants (such as Sam, Mary, Daisy, Judy, and Patrick...)) and thus suppressed any prospective challenge. However, in the whole corpus, this is the only instance of Justify-from-data that was operated in coordination with Distance for the purpose of promoting the author's finding that is different from those in previous studies.

The above four examples illustrated the co-articulation of Distance with Entertain, Pronounce, Endorse, and Justify-from-data, respectively, by which the authors argued for their own research findings in relation to previous knowledge that they disagreed. As can be seen from the explanations, in all excerpts the authors opened up the dialogic space by distancing themselves from prior

utterances which then were countered in order to set up the authorial propositions about different findings. When making new assertions, the authors preferred to use the contractive resources of Proclaim (Pronounce/Endorse). This Distance-Counter-Proclaim strategy acted to create an authorial stance that critically engaged with previous literature and the imagined reader who may doubt their own claims. The co-articulation with Proclaim also worked to position the reader to accept rather than question the author's propositions that are different from the previous views, which therefore can help to achieve the main purpose of the discussion section (see 2.5). This pattern also shows a change authorial intersubjective positioning from dialogic expansive to contractive. The rhetorical effect is to initially make more space for pointing out other views than the one from which the author disaligned but ultimately to shut the space for doubting the author's propositions.

This section so far has presented the pattern of distance that the authors employed to argue against previous literature and advance their own positions. Next, the section compares this pattern across the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpus.

Table 8.1 *Comparisons of Co-articulations of Distance with Pronounce, Endorse, and Entertain, respectively*

Co-articulation	Distance + Pronounce	Distance + Endorse	Distance + Entertain
L ₁ C	16	2	5
L ₁ E	6	5	4

Table 8.1 shows the three frequent co-articulations of Distance with Pronounce, Endorse, and Entertain, respectively, in the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpus. According to the table, there are 16 instances of Distance and Pronounce co-articulation and 2 instances of Distance and Endorse co-articulation in the L₁C corpus, which in total comprises 18 instances of co-articulation of Distance and contractive Engagement options. The table shows a similar picture in the L₁E sub-corpus, where it has 11 instances of co-articulation of Distance and contractive Engagement options including 6 instances of Distance and Pronounce co-articulation and 5 instances of Distance and Endorse co-articulation. However, there are only 5 instances of Distance and Entertain (dialogically expansive) co-articulation in the L₁C sub-corpus and 4 such instances in the L₁E sub-corpus. These results indicate that the preference for co-articulating Distance with contractive options that was observed in the whole corpus applies to both the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpora. Both sets of writers chose to close down the dialogic space when they distanced themselves from previous findings and presented their own.

However, the presence of a combination of Distance and Proclaim as well as a combination of Distance and Entertain seems to reflect Bitchener's (2010) suggestion for writers to make both assertive and tentative claims where necessary in the discussion chapter (see 2.6). What really matters appears to

depend on what alternative voices the author anticipates and how the author intends to respond to them. The greater number of Distance and Proclaim combination in the two sub-corpora suggests that both the L1 Chinese and English writers were more likely to construe for their texts a reader who may raise a different view and therefore chose to shut off the space for dialogic negotiation.

Another similarity shown by the table is the preference for Distance and Pronounce co-articulation across the two sub-corpora. The ratio of Distance and Pronounce co-articulation to Distance and Endorse co-articulation is 8 to 1 and 6 to 5 in the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpus, respectively. The approximate 1 to 1 ratio in the L₁E sub-corpus indicates a more balanced use of the two types of co-articulation by the L1 English writers. In contrary, the L1 Chinese writers rarely used the Distance and Endorse co-articulation (only 2 instances). As previously explained (see 5.2.2.3 and 6.4.5), when Pronounce is used the argumentative power of authorial view is enhanced only by the internal textual voice. Endorse functions differently to reinforce the authorial view by presenting it as shared by both the internal voice and an external voice, which is usually a published source. For this reason, Distance and Endorse co-articulation may achieve a more effective voice to persuade the reader of the authorial propositions. As Wu (2007) has observed in the low-rated argumentative essays,

when writers use Pronounce to advance their position more often than their use of Counter to contradict other positions or Endorse to align with similar position, unconvincing arguments are made and a weakness in interpersonal stance is achieved. The sparse use of Distance and Endorse co-articulation in the L₁C sub-corpus suggests a particular need to make the L1 Chinese writers' awareness of this strategy for promoting their own research findings.

8.1.2 Standing neutral towards previous literature – co-articulations with Acknowledge

Section 8.1.1 has presented three types of co-articulation with Distance and discussed how these patterns worked to position the authors' own research against previous research and promote new findings. However, the choice of Distance (n=37) as a means of engaging with existing knowledge was very infrequent in the whole corpus. Acknowledge instead was far frequently chosen (n=225) to fulfill that genre requirement and thus created an intersubjectively neutral stance, which shows neither alignment with nor disalignment from previous views. This finding parallels Coffin (2009) and Petrić (2007) who both identified that Acknowledge is taken as the main stance for engaging relevant literature in doctoral theses and Masters dissertations, respectively.

Although Martin and White (2005) mainly exemplified instances of Acknowledge that are realized by the framing of propositions via reporting verbs

(e.g. *it's said that, the report states*, p. 134), the qualitative analysis of current data showed that reported speech may be the typical but clearly not the only realization of Acknowledge. The analysis has found that 41 instances of Acknowledge were realized by borrowing terms, concepts, models or theories of other scholars. This tendency was also documented in Petrić's (2007) analysis of citations in Masters dissertations where the category of attribution functions to attribute "a proposition, a term, or a stretch of text, a research, discourse or cognitive act" to an external author (p. 243). This use of Acknowledge was also suggested by Heppner and Heppner (2004) who in their thesis writing guidebook advised writers to acknowledge any "idea, empirical finding, methodological procedure, or scholarly contribution of another professional" (p. 346). Some examples from the current corpus are presented as follows:

57. He is a **person-oriented teacher** (Garton, 2004)... (HW, 2010: 311)
58. I incorporated the **theory of self system** (Dörnyei 2009 and Kubanyiova 2009) with self-efficacy and merged them into a more general category (W, 2010: 186)

Although such use does not present a complete proposition attributed to external voice, by borrowing the name of another's term as in example 57 or that of another's theory as in example 58, the author actively brought in an external voice to their own texts. It is exactly this function that makes such instances fall within the system of Acknowledge. White (2001d) has argued that, "By

referencing the words of another, the writer, at the very least, indicates that these words are in some way relevant to his/her current communicative purposes” (p. 1). As a result, these representations of Acknowledge appear to create an interpersonal stance of “implied ‘relevance’” (White, 2001d, p. 1).

In addition to the 40 instances of Acknowledge explained above, the analysis observed that the remaining 185 (about 5 times as many) instances were indeed realized by reported speech that paraphrased or summarized the attributed materials, 176 out of which were co-articulated with a range of Appraisal options that the authors used to discuss their findings in relation to the acknowledged literature. The qualitative analysis observed that Acknowledge was frequently co-articulated with Entertain (n=49), Bare Assertion (n=45), Counter (n=38), Deny (n=29), and Pronounce (n=21). However, it is not the case that in the current data Acknowledge was co-articulated with these five categories only or that Acknowledge was co-articulated with only one of the five categories at one time. In most instances, Acknowledge was found to be co-articulated with several of the five categories mentioned above, for example: the combination of Acknowledge, Counter, and Pronounce: *In the literature, Oxford (2003) summarizes* (Acknowledge)... *While* (Counter) *these dimensions are found in students’ accounts..., data findings show that* (Pronounce)... (J. 2007, p. 307-8). The remainder of this section presents examples of various frequent patterns of

co-articulation with Acknowledge and discusses how these patterns worked to position the authors' own findings in the context of previous literature towards which the authors adopted a dialogic neutral stance.

Example 59 shows quite a complex co-articulation with Acknowledge which was used across a long span of text.

59. Looking in particular at New Lee sections of the word history chapters that were presented above, **it appears that** contributors to many of the very earliest communicative discussions in the Journal are pre-occupied with the impact of new concepts, and in particular the notions of 'function' and 'communicative competence', as those ideas have been introduced and framed via the Council of Europe team's output. The CoE, and the work, particularly David Wilkins' Notional Syllabuses, undertaken in the wake of the project's activity, **appear to** be by far the most influential in the early communicative discourse of the Journal. ***This finding is somewhat at odds with the "history of ideas" approach common in existing literature.*** The CoE appears in the discourse of the Journal as the major conduit—and **perhaps** the source itself—of ideas impacting on the early movement. In general, and as was noted in the literature review, the work of the Council of Europe's 'Threshold Project' in the early communicative movement is generally well acknowledged in the existing literature, in which it is often described as an important agent in the advancement of the movement's popularity. **Many works, notably encyclopaedia entries such as Johnson's, and Richard and Rogers' (Richards, Rodgers 2001: p.154) historical sketch, refer to the important role of the CoE project team in providing an impetus to the new movement. Howatt, too, describes the work of the team, and explains its basic work at comparative length (e.g. pp. 337—340). In one sense, therefore, the finding that the CoE was massively influential in the early communicative discourse of the Journal seems merely to reinforce the veracity of the accounts furnished in the existing literature. However there is in my opinion a need to make an important, if rather nuanced adjustment to these descriptions. Whereas the CoE is almost ubiquitously acknowledged as important in serious accounts of the early approach, much of the discussion in the Journal articles suggest that it was chief mediator, and even** originator of early communicative principles. **In the Journal the**

Project is frequently referred to not merely as an important stimulus to the new approach —an exemplar of its ideas and a provider of helpful materials—but in a way that suggests that it is the principle source of new concepts. In my view this reassessment is important as it challenges the depiction, ubiquitous in the literature, of the influence of complex, extra-disciplinary theory on the new approach. (HT, 2009: 249-250)

The author's main proposition about his finding as construed by the two instances of Entertain (**it appears that...; appear to....**) at the beginning is that the work of Council of Europe (CoE) has the most influential impact on the early communicative discourse of the ELT Journal. The author then asserted the connection between this finding and the previous view on the CoE that was introduced by acknowledging "history of ideas approach" to studying the communicative language teaching. The author seemed to restate his finding about the influence of CoE again by entertaining his proposition via *perhaps*. After a cross-reference to the literature review chapter, the author introduced Johnson, Richard and Rogers, and Howatt who all regard the CoE as influential in communicative movement (**Many works...such as Johnson's, and Richard and Rogers'...; Howatt, too, describes...**). It can be seen that the first paragraph of this excerpt mainly displayed a dialogic expansive authorial stance towards both the writer's own findings and the relevant literature as construed by a serial use of Entertain and Acknowledge.

The expansive stance spread across the second paragraph where the author suggested a possible response of a potential reader (**seems...to...**) who may think that the author's finding is similar and supportive to these scholars' opinions. Nevertheless, the stance was then turned into a dialogic contractive as the author countered (**However**) that potential response and pronounced his view for the adjustment to the previous scholars' understanding by explicit authorial intervention (**in my opinion**), which construed an interpersonal stance of authority similar to the metadiscourse of self mention (Hyland, 2005, see 2.4) and suggested the contribution of the author's findings. Although the authorial stance remained contractive at the textual moment which countered early accounts for the influence of CoE (**whereas**), interestingly, the stance was switched back to expansive by presenting the author's finding as contingent on his own research evidence and opening space for alternative voices (**much of the discussion in the Journal articles suggest that...**). However, the dialogic space was immediately reduced by use of Justify-from-data which provided specifically supportive evidence from the author's research data (**In the Journal the Project is frequently referred to...**) and thereby reinforced the previously entertained proposition. The author continued to close down the dialogic space by making explicit personal emphasis (**In my view**) on the positive attitude

(important) towards the reassessment of the impact of CoE based on his findings, which promoted the contribution of the author's thesis.

The above explanations show the co-articulation of Acknowledge with Entertain, Counter, Pronounce and Justify-from-data across an extended discourse. The interpersonal meaning construed in each sentence worked together to create a dynamic authorial stance. The encodings of Acknowledge construed an intersubjectively neutral stance towards the previous literature while the encodings of Entertain, and Pronounce and Justify-from-data construed a changing stance from expansive to contractive towards the author's claims about his own findings. The expansive stance can help to build solidarity with those who hold alternative positions and the contractive stance can help to increase the argumentative power of propositions, both of which ultimately can diminish the possibility of rejection of the authorial claims (Martin & White, 2005). As Coffin (2002) stated, "[writer and reader] solidarity may be best achieved either by construing the addressee as sharing a similar worldview or by acknowledging a diversity and multiplicity of standpoints, beliefs and attitudes as constituted in discursive practices" (p. 518). The co-articulations with Acknowledge shown in example 59 seem to reflect this statement and achieve good writer-reader solidarity and therefore fulfill the rhetorical purpose of persuading the reader of significance of findings in relation to literature in the discussion section.

Moreover, the interpersonal value of Counter functioned to break the interpersonal prosody and thereby realized the shift in authorial stance, which can also achieve the rhetorical consequence of leading the reader to interpret the writer's intended stance. This phenomenon was also noted in Hood (2005, 2006) where counter-expectancy expressions were used to mark the change of a "prosodic domain" or "prosodic key" (p. 54 & p. 45). Overall, example 59 presents a highly heteroglossic text in which the complex co-articulations with Acknowledge demonstrated the author's strategic engagement with relevant literature while discussing the significance of his research findings.

Excerpt 60 shows another example of the co-articulation of Acknowledge with Entertain, Pronounce, and Endorse. This excerpt is from a thesis which examined the influence of a "cross-linguistic (L1/L2) approach to language awareness" on an "L2 initial teacher education program for pre-service trainees" in Japan (M, 2012, p. x). One major aspect of its discussion chapter concerns the re-conceptualization of "the construct of L2 Teacher Language Awareness (TLA)," part of which is shown in the excerpt below.

60. **Some commentators on the subject, for example Thornbury (1997) and Hales (1997), view TLA as essentially a knowledge-based product. Others, for example Andrews (2007), regard TLA as an 'attribute' which L2 teachers may 'possess' in varying degrees. Following Wright and Bolitho (1993) and Bolitho et al (2003), one might additionally conceive of TLA as being a 'state' or 'approach' in which knowledge about language is accessed and called upon in the service of L2 learning, planning and instruction. All three of these representations appear to have**

value, and any comprehensive definition of TLA should, **I think**, aim to highlight the dynamic complexity of TLA, **which is a key feature noted by Andrews (2007)**. (M, 2012: 244).

The author first presented three different previous views on TLA which demonstrated his understanding of relevant literature but did not show any explicit positioning towards any of the views, at least at this textual moment. The author then made a positive attitude towards the three viewpoints but entertained this evaluation (**appear to**) as one of a range of possible views. The review of other researchers' opinions on TLA set up the pronounced authorial position (**I think**) for a dynamic view on TLA. It can be seen that at this point the proceeding dialogic expansive stance was turned into contractive. The degree of contractive stance was further reinforced by the author's alignment with other researcher **Andrews (2007)** as encoded by Endorse. The interplay between Pronounce and Endorse rhetorically achieved an increase in the interpersonal cost of challenging the authorial view and therefore provided limited space for negotiating with alternative views. This co-articulation with Pronounce and Endorse was also observed as a tendency in higher-scored undergraduates' argumentative essays (Wu, 2007). Overall, similar to the above excerpt, example 60 also displays a dynamic construal of interpersonal stance from dialogic expansive to contractive.

Excerpt 61 shows the co-articulation of Acknowledge with Deny and Pronounce whereas excerpt 62 shows the co-articulation of Acknowledge with Counter, Deny, and Pronounce. The expansive-contractive pattern of stance was also reflected in these two examples.

61. On the one hand, **Little (2007a) strongly argues that** language learner autonomy equates to communicative ability and should be developed through a dynamic communicative approach in language education. On the other hand, **Holec (1996) points out that** learners might have different objectives such as linguistic knowledge, communicative ability, special needs or process of learning. Moreover, development of learner autonomy prioritizes learning management (e.g. **Wenden, 1991; Holec, 1996**). These theoretical debates **never** come to a conclusion since **no** relevant research has been done. **The present study, with research evidence, suggests that** language learner autonomy can mean two broad objectives: learner autonomy for academic success (LAAS) and learner autonomy for communicative ability (LACA) (J, 2007: 278)
62. **In the previous studies of and theoretical discussions about task motivation, few researchers have made explicit statements about** to what extent the generalized and situational motivational influences work respectively on learners' task motivation. **Though** in the present research there was **no** 'hard' data which could offer an exact proportion between generalised and situational motivation; **nevertheless, it was felt that** the latter played a relatively important role and exerted more direct influence on learners' task motivation. (L, 2007: 207)

Both excerpts initially built the base for discussion of the authors' own findings by referencing previous scholarship without taking a particular positioning towards it (**Little (2007a).... Holec (1996)... Moreover... (e.g. Wenden, 1991; Holec, 1996)...and few researchers..., respectively**). In example 61 the expansive stance was then broken by use of the contractive

option Deny (**never... no...**) which refuted the potentially alternative view that theoretical debates over the construct of learner autonomy have reached a consensus as a result of relevant studies having been conducted. The denial of this view also carved out the research niche for discussing the author's study and thus implied its significance¹⁰. The contractive stance unfolded as the author put forward her finding about a two-facet understanding of learner autonomy by Pronounce (**The present study, with respect to research evidence, suggests that...**)¹¹. In example 62, the combination of Counter (**Though**) and Deny (**no**) marked the transition of authorial stance to contractive and also functioned to reject the possible view that believes the author's study has provided exact and quantitative result about the relationship between generalized and situational motivation, which seemed to project the author's caution on the subsequent proposition about her finding. The maintenance of contractive stance was carried by the use of Counter (**nevertheless**) and Pronounce (**it was felt that...**) which emphasized the author's proposition about the finding of a more powerful situational motivation. The overall rhetorical strategy used in the two examples of 61 and 62 can be seen as to align the reader with the authors' findings which

¹⁰ In the whole corpus, the creation of research gap which sets one's own findings in the context of previous literature was found to be alternatively realized by other options or combinations of options including Counter + Deny (n=6), Counter + Entertain (n=3), and Counter (n=2).

¹¹ The realization of Pronounce in example 61 differs from the prototypical realizations explained in Martin and White (2005) (see detailed discussion in 8.2.2).

was discussed against the previous scholarship being acknowledged at the beginning.

The above four examples have presented the complex co-articulations with Acknowledge and the dynamic construction of interpersonal positioning towards the wider literature and towards the potential reader. The patterns and explanations discussed above can be useful to complement the pedagogical material which did not contain such authentic examples about the use of interpersonal language but merely presented a list of some linguistic items or phrases (see 2.6). This is a potential contribution of the thesis once the current corpus is made public and could be used by material writers.

Additionally, from example 59 to 62, it is hardly possible to discern a clear authorial positioning towards the previous literature even with the consideration of the co-text, although the positive attitude (...have value) towards the three external sources realized by Entertain (**appear to**) in excerpt 60 seems to indicate the author's slight alignment with these attributed positions. Another instance of using Bare Assertion to make connection has been presented above in example 59 (**This finding is somewhat at odds with...**), which indicates the difference between the author's finding and previous knowledge and may invoke the author's disalignment. Such disalignment appears not as strong as or as definite as the one conveyed by Distance (see 8.1.1), and this

implicit disalignment seems to reflect Myers' (1989) observation of a general reluctance to explicitly disagree in public with other research. These instances can be pedagogically beneficial to enlarge thesis writers' repertoire of interpersonal resources for taking a subtle critical stance towards previous research, which would express some sense of evaluation but also prevent them from being blamed. As Parry (1998) has argued, "doctoral students certainly cannot afford to make offensive judgements about their senior colleagues, whose approval may be sought in the examination process" (p. 291). The awareness-raising of these instances will also be useful for novice writers who may have problem with managing authorial positioning towards a wider literature while discussing their research findings (see 2.5).

Another instance where Entertain (**may**) was used to present other scholar's idea (**Littlewood's (1999) suggestion of 'reactive autonomy'**) as a potential solution for teachers in the author's own research context is shown by example 63. Example 64 shows the use of Entertain (**might**) to suggest the application of a previously established notion to discussing the author's finding about a change in the ELT Journal readership which is evidenced by semantic shifts in some key words of the author's data. The use of Entertain in both examples seemed to invoke the author's alignment with previous knowledge. This tendency to indirectly indicate the author's stance (a slight alignment or

disalignment) towards the attributed value positions reflects Martin and White's (2005) statement that "alignment-neutral attributions" are less typical in argumentative genres such as "political speeches or academic articles" (p. 115), although the number of implicit (dis)alignment attributions is not high (n=50) compared to the total number of Acknowledge (n=225). The qualitative analysis further observed that the connection between the acknowledged literature and the author's own research was most often realized by Bare Assertion (n=31) and Entertain (n=8)¹². Despite the relatively low frequency, these instances can be pedagogically beneficial.

63. ...teachers who hand over the learning responsibility to learners all at once may easily generate learners' negative affect for teachers... In this case, Littlewood's (1999) suggestion of 'reactive autonomy', in which learners autonomously engage in the agenda set by teachers rather than taking full responsibility for their learning, **may** be a good starting point for Taiwanese teachers. (W, 2010: 205)
64. The notion of the 'discourse community' put forward by Swales (1990), and also utilised by Byrnes to describe the readership of the MLJ, (e.g. p. 474) **might** reasonably be applied to the ELT Journal readership in the same way. (HT, 2009: 261)

The next part of this section compares the most frequently occurring co-articulations with Acknowledge in the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpora in order to see whether there is any different preference for a particular co-articulation.

¹² In addition to the total 39 instances used as indicators of connection which were realized by Bare Assertion and Entertain, there are other 11 instances which were realized by Entertain + Deny (n=2), Entertain + Counter (n=3), Entertain + Counter (n=1), Counter (n=2), Deny (n=2), and Counter + Entertain + Deny (n=1).

Table 8.2 *Comparisons of the Co-articulations of Acknowledge with Bare Assertion, Counter, Deny, Pronounce, and Entertain, respectively*

Co-articulation	Acknowledge + Bare Assertion	Acknowledge + Counter	Acknowledge + Deny	Acknowledge + Pronounce	Acknowledge + Entertain
L ₁ C	15	21	12	11	19
L ₁ E	30	17	16	10	30

As Table 8.2 shows, in the L₁C sub-corpus, the total number of the co-articulations of Acknowledge with contractive Engagement options is 44 (Counter n=21, Deny n=12, and Pronounce n=11), which is more than 2 times as many as the number of Acknowledge and Entertain co-articulation (n=19). In the L₁E sub-corpus, there is a very similar number of 43 instances of Acknowledge co-articulated with contractive options (Counter n=17, Deny n=16, and Pronounce n=10), which is also more than the number of Acknowledge and Entertain co-articulation (n=30). It can be seen from the above explanations that some instances of Counter and Deny were used to indicate a research gap (see footnote 10) or the connection between previous and the author's own research (see footnote 12). Although these instances may not directly be employed to present authorial propositions about findings, their co-articulations with Acknowledge can help to set the writer's research in relation to previous literature before they make specific claims about findings, which were often found to be realized by Pronounce and Entertain.

A seemingly surprising finding is the quite large number of the Acknowledge and Bare Assertion co-articulation in the L₁E sub-corpus.

However, as explained earlier (see above example 63), 31 instances of Bare Assertion in the whole corpus were used to point out the connection between previous literature and the authors' research rather than used to make authorial propositions. Among the 31 instances, 22 were from the L₁E sub-corpus while 9 were from the L₁C sub-corpus. When these instances were taken out, there actually remain only 8 instances of Acknowledge and Bare Assertion co-articulation in the L₁E sub-corpus and 6 such instances in the L₁C sub-corpus, both of which are much less than the number of co-articulations of Acknowledge and Pronounce or Entertain in the two sub-corpora, respectively. Additionally, 2 out of the 6 instances of Bare Assertion in the L₁E sub-corpus, which were used to make claims about findings, were further co-articulated with Justify-from-data. In this way, the monoglossic assertions which sound categorical and may cause challenge from the reader seem to be supported by the specific evidence from research data.

8.1.3 Aligning with previous literature – co-articulations with Endorse

Section 8.1.1 and 8.1.2 have presented two types of expansive authorial positioning towards previous literature which are realized by Distance and Acknowledge and their co-articulations with other Appraisal options. This section shows the contractive positioning which is realized by Endorse and

displays the writers' alignment with the attributed propositions. It further illustrates with examples from the data how Endorse was co-articulated with other Appraisal options for the purpose of discussing the writers' findings that are similar to other research. The annotation of the whole corpus identified 346 instances of Endorse (see 7.1.1). In situations like this when concordancing software generates too many results that are beyond the ability of a researcher to analyze qualitatively, Wynne (2009) stated that a common solution is to analyze a reduced number of examples and recommended to "select every nth example" from the total in order to avoid a biased sample (p. 711). Therefore, I chose every second instance of Endorse from each text so that the number of instances selected for qualitative analysis will be approximately proportional to the total number of Endorse in that text.

The qualitative analysis of the 170 selected instances of Endorse first found that in the current corpus Endorse was more frequently (n=72) used subsequent to the authorial propositions about research findings (e.g. excerpt 66, *Therefore, teachers might be unaware that... **Kao and Huang (2005) also found that...***) than prior to (n=42) such propositions (e.g. excerpt 67, ***According to Wheeler (1967)...** It was shown from the questionnaire and interview data...*). There are also 10 instances of Endorse where the authorial propositions about research findings were presented both prior and subsequent to each instance (e.g.

excerpt 68, *This is important... as Slimani says... However, evidence from the lesson transcripts seems to suggest that...*). The remaining 46 instances were found to be used as a way for the authors to present a point of view by the voice of other scholars, without making overt reference to their own research. That is, the internal authorial voice is conflated with the external voice and thereby is presented as aligning with the value positions which are contained in attributed material. Excerpt 65 represents such an example and is taken from a thesis that explored the implementation of Hong Kong's TOC (Target-Oriented Curriculum) in primary English classrooms by three teachers.

65. In 3.2.3, I noted the examination-oriented nature of schooling in Hong Kong...
 The TOC framework attempts to overthrow these societal views of competitive examination elements by proposing a paradigm shift from summative to formative, and from norm-referenced to criterion-referenced assessment (Clark et al., 1994; Morris et al., 1999). (C, 2001: 288)

The author first referred back to a previously discussed point about the examination-oriented nature of Hong Kong's education and then elaborated the local context's emphasis on the importance of competitive examinations before he pointed out the proposition that TOC works as a challenge to such view by referring to several scholars (Clark et al., 1994; Morris et al., 1999) who were presented as sharing the proposition currently being advanced. The use of Endorse in this example added to the argumentative force of the proposition by

construing it as one which is not the author's alone but one which is shared with relevant experts and by the "purported authoritativeness of the cited external source" (White, 2003, p. 270). The rhetorical consequence is to fend off any actual or potential dialogic alternatives and thus to position the reader to align with the author's proposition.

A further analysis of the 124 instances of Endorse which were co-articulated with the authors' propositions about their findings showed that Endorse was most frequently combined with Entertain (n=60), Bare Assertion (n=37), Pronounce (n=45), Counter (n=23), and Deny (n=21). It has to be pointed out that any of the five Appraisal options mentioned above can be used prior or subsequent to Endorse, either alone or with another option, to present authorial propositions. The rest of this section presents examples of different co-articulations with Endorse and discusses how the authors persuaded the reader of their propositions about research findings by aligning with similar previous views.

Excerpt 66 presents the co-articulation of Endorse with Entertain where the external proposition was used subsequent to the authorial proposition. The author, based on her findings, made a proposition about the lack of awareness of the published checklists for selecting textbooks among the teachers in her research context.

66. As we can see from the findings presented in section 6.3, the majority of teachers had not taken any training course on evaluating materials. Therefore, teachers **might** be unaware that published checklists specifically designed to help them to select a textbook exist. **Kao and Huang (2005) also found that** more than half of the teachers they interviewed admitted that they do not have clear teaching goals in their minds and have not been trained in the textbook selection process. (HG, 2011: 201)

The authorial voice while presenting this proposition was construed as actively opening up the dialogic space (**may**) to alternative views in the relevant discourse community. However, the author introduced into the text an attributed proposition which holds a similar view (**Kao and Huang (2005) also found that...**) and presented the textual voice as aligning with that presumably authoritative external voice. Therefore, although the authorial voice initially entertained the potential views different from her own, it turned into dialogic contractive so as to fend off such views by support from previous literature. The interpersonal cost of challenging the authorial proposition thus is increased and the reader is forced to accept it. This example also seems to reflect the suggestion from Oliver's (2004) thesis writing guidebook that one typical way of justifying authorial propositions is to "point to previous research and to argue that the new assertion can be seen as reasonable in the light of that" (p. 15). As mentioned earlier, in the whole corpus, there are a majority of instances of this type of co-articulation where Endorse is used subsequent to authorial propositions and serves to support those propositions. This finding in a sense supports Bloch and

Chi (1995) who revealed that social science authors of research articles written in both English and Chinese “used more citations for supporting their arguments, which could indicate a greater use of source texts for their rhetorical power” (p. 256).

Excerpt 67 presents the co-articulation of Endorse with Pronounce where the external proposition was used preceding the authorial proposition.

67. **According to Wheeler (1967)**, curriculum ideologies, as inspirations for educational change, often represent optimistic views. When implementations are being sought, difficulties and confusions often result. **It was shown from the questionnaire and interview data that** despite these teachers’ overwhelming enthusiasms, various constraints and difficulties were spelt out for implementing change. (WG, 2007: 226)

The author first referred to the previous view (**According to Wheeler (1967)...**) on the difficulties that implementations of educational change often cause. The author then put forward the proposition that her research also found constraints and difficulties for implementing the curriculum goal of learner centered approach in classroom practice. The authorial voice of this proposition was foregrounded which invoked the existence of potential alternatives but in order to confront such positions, although the authorial emphasis was realized objectively (**It was shown from the questionnaire and interview data that...**) rather than subjectively (see example 59, 60 & 5.2.2.3). This example seems to reflect another type of justification for authorial propositions which is “to make

reference to previous literature on the topic being considered” as suggested in Oliver (2004) (p. 15).

Example 68 represents the co-articulation of Endorse with a range of other Appraisal options by which the authorial propositions were constructed and combined with the attributed proposition. This excerpt is from a section which mainly discussed the importance of the inclusion of students’ perspectives in teacher appraisal.

68. ***This is important***, because, **as Slimani says:**

Discourse is not something prepared beforehand by the teacher and simply implemented with the students. Instead it is jointly constructed by contributions from both parties so that the learners are not just passively fed from the instructor’s plan (1992:197)

However, evidence from the lesson transcripts seems to suggest that this is what actually happens: the relative silence of the students during model lessons means that joint construction is **not** apparent. (HW, 2010: 325)

Just proceeding example 68, the author stated the view that the voice of students should be included in order to make model lessons improve their value. She continued, in this excerpt, to monoglossically assert that view (through reference by pronounce *this*) as important, which was then co-articulated with another presumably authoritative voice that provided justification for her assertion. Therefore, although the author initially was presented as not recognizing dialogic diversity, the co-articulation of Bare Assertion with Endorse seems to indicate a shift of authorial interpersonal positioning from monoglossic

to dialogic contractive, which consequently implies the author's awareness of possible confronting voices and willingness to refute them.

The author then made an argument about his finding that joint construction of discourse in teacher appraisal in his research context is not apparent as indicated by the relative silence of the students. The proposition was signaled as different from the previously introduced view (**However**) and as recognizing potential alternative positions (**seems to suggest**). Interestingly, while the author chose to adopt an expansive interpersonal positioning through encoding the value of Entertain at the level of a matrix clause, he changed this positioning to contractive through encoding the value of Deny by a “sub-clausal element” (**not**) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 131). It seems that this strategy, based on Martin and White's (2005) explanation of the reader-alignment achieved by Entertain and Deny, first helped to create the solidarity with those who hold to alternative positions but then to argue against the imagined reader who might think of the presence of a jointly-constructed discourse in the model lessons observed by the author.

Example 69 shows another example where Endorse was co-articulated with Pronounce and Entertain.

69. **The results of the post-course questionnaires, learner interviews and learner reflective diaries show that** the observed competence of teachers **may** influence the value learners attach to the teacher, their affect for the teacher as well as their attitudes toward the course tasks (see 4.1.3.2). **The**

result is in line with Banfield, Richmond and McCroskey's (2006) study in which they claim that incompetent teachers may negatively impact learners' affect for the teacher and decrease their motivation to take a class with the teacher. (W, 2010: 197)

Unlike example 66, the author in this excerpt combined her result with the external material which she explicitly presented as aligned with. This use seems to reflect Murray's (2011) suggestion (see 2.6) of writing about one's work and published work in the same sentence as a strategy for reinforcing the argument. However, such use seems to be more of writer's individual preference as the total of 9 instances, including example 69, that were analyzed all came from one particular text. Other similar expressions include: *These results correspond to the study of...; This result is supported by the study conducted by...; The results of the present study are consistent with the study conducted by...; The relationship...was also discussed in the studies of...*

Additionally, when the author put forward the proposition she contracted dialogic space for alternatives through encoding Pronounce by means of matrix-clause (**The results of the post-course questionnaires, learner interviews and learner reflective diaries show that...**) but chose to expand the limited space through encoding Entertain by means of a sub-clausal element (**may**), which represents a shift in interpersonal positioning opposite to that displayed in example 68. The strategy used in this excerpt acted to construe the author as positioning the reader to take up the authorial proposition but then

creating the dialogic relationship of alignment with the reader who might view differently. More such instances are presented and explained in 8.2.1 that focuses on discussing the use of Pronounce to make arguments about the authors' own findings.

Instead of simultaneously expressing the author's and external work in one sentence, the qualitative analysis also observed a tendency of explicitly signaling positive connection between the author's own and previous research in the sentence following the one which introduced the external material. In the three examples presented below, the authors pointed out the positive connection between their own research and the view of previous scholar by means of Bare Assertion (**are able to provide further confirming evidence**), Entertain (**appears to**) and Pronounce (**I think**), respectively.

70. **Morris (1999b) identifies this aspect as being one of the significant impacts of TOC:**

Some teachers claimed that they had been trying to use pedagogies which promoted task-based learning, interaction and group-work prior to the introduction of TOC but had found this difficult to sustain as it was in tension with the established patterns of schooling. The introduction of TOC served to change this scenario. (p.9)

The comments of teachers A and C (5.4.4) are able to provide further confirming evidence of this impact of TOC. (C, 2001: 275)

71. In a discussion of the difficulties inherent in attempting complex change, **Fullan (1991a) suggests that** "the answer seems to be to break complex changes into components and implement them in a divisible and/or incremental manner" (p. 72). This **seems to** be in line with teacher C's suggestion in 5.4.1 that for TOC it is preferable to implement the teaching part before changing the assessment aspects. (C, 2001: 277).

72. By way of a counterpart to the central research question, the research sub-question was concerned with the ways in which a transition from a state of teacher-dependent (cross-linguistic) language awareness to a state of autonomous (cross-linguistic) language awareness might be effected such that this latter is capable of being sustained and developed by trainees subsequent to the initial focus on an L2 ITE program. **The following conceptualization—formulated by Widdowson (2003:115) in respect of L2 learning** – serves **I think** as a **useful** point of departure in this connection:

To think of objectives in terms of investment, rather than rehearsal, is to recognize that the end of a course of teaching does not by any means constitute the end of learning, but is only a stage in its development. The purpose of the course is to give momentum and direction, to establish vectors, so to speak, for subsequent learning, and thus to provide bearings whereby learners can make sense and learn from their own linguistic experience.

The qualitative analysis observed a total of 11 instances like the above examples where the connection was most frequently made via the three options (Entertain n=4, Pronounce n=3, and Bare Assertion n=2). Interestingly, this way of endorsing previous literature was not observed in the L₁C corpus, which suggests that this pattern may be less well known by these L1 Chinese writers and therefore suggests that these writers or perhaps other novice writers can benefit from examining such examples in this corpus and trying to use this strategy where necessary in their own writing.

Overall, as reviewed in 2.6, most of the thesis writing guidebooks did not provide specific information on the way of engaging with relevant literature while discussing one's own findings despite the general suggestion of presenting how the findings contradict or support previous knowledge. Examples presented

in this section and the above two sections and actually more similar examples found in the current corpus can be used for complementing such books or for designing new materials which aim at explaining thesis writing particularly the aspect of using interpersonal language in this genre. This benefit of providing empirical instances of language use for language teaching and learning materials is in fact one important advantage of corpus-based approach to analyzing language and discourse (see 2.7), and results of the current study can be seen as contributing in this regard.

The rest of this section compares the frequently occurring co-articulations with Endorse in the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpus.

Table 8.3 *Comparisons of the Co-articulations of Endorse with Bare Assertion, Counter, Deny, Pronounce, and Entertain, respectively*

Co-articulation	Endorse + Bare Assertion	Endorse + Counter	Endorse + Deny	Endorse + Pronounce	Endorse + Entertain
L ₁ C	17	6	8	24	30
L ₁ E	20	17	13	21	30

The table first shows that the number of Endorse and Pronounce co-articulation is less than that of Endorse and Entertain co-articulation in both the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpus, respectively. This reflects the authors' tendency to use expansive Engagement option to present research findings while aligning themselves with some similar external views. This finding is opposite to the tendency to co-articulate Distance with contractive options (see 8.1.1).

Considering the fact that propositions by Endorse tended to follow authorial propositions (see beginning of this section), it may be assumed that when the authors presented claims for findings as but one of many possibilities via Entertain, they brought in further support from literature via Endorse so as to close the dialogic space which is expanded by Entertain and thereby position the reader to accept their propositions. As a result, the argumentative force of authorial assertions being construed by Entertain tends to be increased and less expansive. Furthermore, the table shows balanced distributions of Endorse and Bare Assertion, Pronounce, and Entertain combination, respectively, across both the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpora but that fewer occurrences of Counter and Deny used as options for making claims about findings in the L₁C sub-corpus. This result suggests the need to make this set of L1 Chinese writers and perhaps other novice writers aware of these alternatives to discuss one's research findings.

The above table also shows that there are a few instances of Endorse and Bare Assertion co-articulation (17 in the L₁C corpus and 20 in the L₁E corpus), where Bare Assertion was employed to make arguments about the authors' own findings. However, such assertions seem to be less monoglossic in that the co-articulation with Endorse for one thing signals the authors' anticipation of possible challenge and for another thing sustains authorial assertions by similar views that are held by other experts in the relevant discourse community. This

result again suggests that at least the L1 Chinese writers in this study, as their counterparts of L1 English writers, have both developed the awareness of presenting a justified interpersonal stance while discussing their own findings in theses.

8.2 Making claims about authors' findings

Section 8.1 has examined the three basic authorial positioning (Distance, Acknowledge, and Endorse) towards previous literature and their co-articulations with a range of other Appraisal options, respectively, and illustrated how different co-articulations helped the authors discuss their own findings in relation to the existing knowledge. However, in this section, the focus of analysis moves away from authorial stance towards the literature to stance towards propositions about their findings. Specifically, this section examines the two most frequently occurring heteroglossic options (Entertain $n=1055$ and Pronounce $n=519$) in the whole corpus by which the 12 authors employed to argue for their own findings.

8.2.1 Making dialogic contractive authorial claims – use of Pronounce

The qualitative analysis of all instances of Pronounce first noted that realizations of Pronounce by reporting verbs ($n=147$, e.g. *the data show/reveal/demonstrate/prove/indicate/suggest/confirm that...*) were more frequently chosen than somewhat typical realizations of Pronounce as

exemplified in Martin and White (2005) (n=32, e.g. *in fact*). The much higher frequency of occurrence of the former type of realization reflects Charles' (2006) view that reporting clauses play an important role in the construction of claims about the writer's own work which "offer an important opportunity for writers to position themselves within their disciplinary community" (p. 494).

It can be seen from Table 8.4 that in the whole corpus the top two frequently used reporting verbs in realizations of Pronounce are *show* (n=60) and *reveal* (n=37). Together with the number of *demonstrate* (n=13), the occurrences of the three reporting verbs account for roughly 75% of all types of reporting verbs in realizations of Pronounce.

Table 8.4 *Use of Different Reporting Verbs in Pronounce*

	Show	Reveal	Suggest	Demonstrate	Prove	Indicate	Confirm ¹³
L ₁ C	58	30	9	7	6	5	1
L ₁ E	2	7	10	6	1	4	1
Total	60	37	19	13	7	9	2

Some realizations from this corpus are displayed by examples 73, 74, and 75 below:

73. **The data showed that** the economic dimension had influences on students' learner autonomy in both types... (J, 2007: 301)
74. **The result of the pre-course questionnaires reveals that** the target learners considered teachers who can practically combine English with their daily lives to be especially motivating (see 4.1.3.1)... (W, 2010: 197)

¹³ These instances include all inflection forms of each word in table Table 8.4.

75. **The foregoing analysis has demonstrated that** awareness-raising in respect of a range of issues at the L1 Japanese/L2 English interface (i.e. context-specific EFL –related issues) is a key element in the promotion of a localized L2 pedagogy... (M, 2012: 272)

The subjects of the above three examples (*data*, *results*, and *analysis*) belong to Charles' (2006) categorization of the "products (e.g. *result*, *data*)" and "processes (e.g. *analysis*, *observation*)" within the "research nouns" (p. 501).

The qualitative analysis found that 120 out of the total 147 instances in Table 8.4 actually have the two categories of research nouns as subjects. This concurs with Charles' (2006) finding that most subjects in reported clauses of the writers' own work in theses from both Material Science and Politics are research nouns.

Charles (2006) argued that the use of these non-human subjects function to obscure the role of researcher in taking responsibility for propositions being advanced "by attributing it to a feature of their work" (p. 500). This *research nouns + reporting verbs* form also can be seen as what Martin and White (2005) classified as implicit realizations of Pronominal in which the writer's subjective role in making the proposition is hidden. Therefore, it may be argued that the use of such realizations as shown in examples from 73 to 75 enabled the writers to increase their emphasis on propositions about their findings through a less overt way which seems to mark this dialogic contractive stance as object or in Martin and White's word "impersonalized" (p. 131). This use further suggests how these

writers managed to construct a persuasive argument while at the same time trying to maintain some level of the “appearance of objectivity” (Johns, 1997, p. 60).

In addition, as mentioned earlier, the three items *show*, *reveal*, and *demonstrate* comprised the majority of all the realizations of Pronounce involving reporting verbs. According to the discussions above, the present study found that these reporting verbs were more frequently used with research nouns. This finding also accords with Charles’ (2006) observation that thesis writers from Materials Science generally used the category of “SHOW verbs” (e.g. *show*, *demonstrate*, *reveal*) with research nouns (p. 503), but contrasts with her finding that writers from Politics preferred to use “ARGUE verbs” (e.g. *argue*, *propose*) with text nouns which “attribute responsibility primarily to text” such as “*thesis* and *chapter*” (p. 501). These results seem to be interesting considering that ELT/Applied Linguistics might be expected to share a similar practice of knowledge construction with Politics because both can be seen as located in the social science. Charles (2006) argued that the differences in the use of the two verb groups in Materials Science and Politics can be explained by the former discipline’s construction of knowledge “through experimentation” and the latter “through text-based procedures” (p. 502). Based on Charles’ (2006) account, the frequent use of SHOW verb with a research noun seen in the current corpus may indicate knowledge construction in ELT/Applied Linguistics, which also

involves some tests, surveys, and interviews, tends to be achieved through some specific research actions as well. As a result, when writers make claims about their findings, the nominalizations of research actions or products (e.g. *analysis*, *results*) provide the basis for their claims.

Except for the frequent use of *show* and *reveal*, it is surprising that the whole corpus presented 18 instances of *suggest* which were found to perform the function of Pronounce. However, unlike the formulations of *show* and *reveal* as presented above, when *suggest* was used as Pronounce, there are always some semantic signals which can be seen as indicating the function of contracting the dialogic space. The qualitative analysis found that such signals were often represented by: 1) reference to research evidence (n=7), for example:

76. **Evidence from the materials analysis suggests that** relying on seen words from the start of English learning is not controversial, or that at least ‘words on the page’ from the start is very widespread publishing practice... (R, 2011: 236-7)

The reference to evidence emerged from the author’s analysis of research materials seems to make the interpersonal meaning of *suggest* skew towards that of *show* and *reveal*, which functions to increase authorial emphasis on the proposition being advanced and therefore contracts the dialogic space for negotiating with other possibilities. A second type of signal that was found by qualitative analysis is: 2) co-articulation with Counter (n=4), for example:

77. As stated in chapter 2, ‘Chinese’ emphasis in learner autonomy theory pays attention to characteristics such as... These elements were found in students’ conceptions. **However, the data suggested that** these themes could be more complicated than could be easily explained by resorting to traditional cultural traits. (J, 2007: 268)

In this example, the author first reported the finding about the existence of some characteristics of learner autonomy in Chinese tradition which were presented in chapter 2 of literature review. Then, the immediate use of Counter (**However**) indicates that the author was going to make a somewhat different proposition. By co-articulating with this dialogic contractive option, the interpersonal meaning of this expression that **the data suggested that...** also seems to be pushed towards the contractive “end” of the continuum of expansive and contractive force of Engagement options.

Alternatively, the signal was found to be realized by: 3) co-articulation with Endorse (n=2), for example:

78. **The co-existence of LAAS and LACA suggests that** language learner autonomy is not restricted to communicative ability **as is claimed by Little (2007a)**... (J, 2007: 280)

In example 78, the reference to previous researcher **Little (2007a)** which was in similar position with the author provided external support for authorial view so that the expression **The co-existence of LAAS and LACA suggests that...** appears to take the role of Pronounce. Therefore, despite the word *suggest* in itself often marks “a degree of uncertainty” (Johns, 2006, p. 57), such marking

can vary when this item is co-articulated with certain contractive option, as shown in the examples 77 and 78.

The fourth type of signal as found by the qualitative analysis is: 4) direct authorial intervention (n=5), for instance:

79. **I suggest that** if policy-makers want teachers to understand and implement new reform agendas, they need to explicitly indicate the relationship between different reforms, acknowledge what the positive and negative outcomes of previous reforms were and state how the new reform both tackles earlier constraints and adds value... (C, 2001: 276)

In example 79, although one may consider **I suggest that...** as the expansive option of Entertain merely in terms of the reporting word itself, in this genre it can be argued that such expression has a function of Pronounce as it was often used to promote original research-data based propositions. This use appears similar to the metadiscourse device of self mention which functions to present the authors' contributions in both published academic discourse and doctoral theses across disciplines (Hyland, 2001, 2010, see 2.4). Therefore, I would argue that the formulation of *I suggest* like other similar formulations such as *I found/believe* shown in this corpus also functioned as Pronounce. The analysis together found 72 instances of explicit authorial intervention as Pronounce (5 out of which was realized by *I suggest...*), which is about 14% of all instances of Pronounce. This fairly large amount is to an extent consistent with the general finding about frequent occurrences of self mention in research articles and

doctoral theses from social science disciplines (Dueñas, 2007; Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2010, see 2.4).

The qualitative analysis further found that only 26 of these instances occurred in the L₁C sub-corpus but almost 2 times as many instances (n=46) occurred in the L₁E sub-corpus. This result indicates that compared to the L1 English writers in this study, the L1 Chinese writers may be less willing to allow author visibility while putting forward propositions. Similarly, Li and Wharton (2012) found that self mentions were seldom used by writers from a university in China. Hyland (2002, 2010) also observed that undergraduate and Masters students tended to avoid using self mention (see 2.4) and inferred several reasons for this unwillingness such as “recommendations from style manuals, uncertainties about disciplinary conventions, culturally shaped epistemologies, culture specific views of authority, conflicting teacher advice, or personal preferences” (2002, p. 1107). The review of thesis writing books particularly the content about writing discussion in 2.6 did not seem to identify any specific advice on an objective voice or discouraging the use of first person pronouns. The influence of cultural or L1 rhetorical views may be more likely to account for the low occurrence of explicit authorial intervention in the L₁C corpus, which echoes previous views that Chinese rhetoric does not value individualism to the

same degree as does English rhetoric (Bloch & Chi, 1995). Therefore, it may be beneficial to raise Chinese writers' awareness of this realization of Pronounce.

So far, the section has discussed some congruent realizations of Pronounce (e.g. *the data show/reveal that...*) and some less congruent realizations which function as Pronounce by, for example, co-articulation with other Appraisal options (Counter/Endorse). Another point worth discussing is the use of *indicate*. Johns (2006) closely examined the use of *indicate* in articles in "Nature" and found that *indicate* is the most frequently used reporting verb in his data and that it may be chosen because of its ambiguous meaning, or in Johns' (2006) words, "it incorporates a measure of deliberate vagueness (Channell 1994), avoiding the clearer specifications of suggest or demonstrate" (p. 61). However, the present study found a total of 45 occurrences of *indicate* which are fewer than those of *show* (see Table 8.4). Yet, this study supports Johns' (2006) conclusion as reflected by both *indicate* as Entertain (n=36) and *indicate* as Pronounce (n=9), although the greater number of the former suggests this item's tendency to realizing a dialogic expansive function at least in the genre examined. This finding further implies that some linguistic items may tend to realize certain interpersonal functions, but this does not mean that they are totally tied to always performing that function. It can be pedagogically useful to make this aspect clear to some novice writers who may think of an absolute one-to-one

relationship between form and function. If they realize that the relationship is not so simple, they could better deploy certain interpersonal resources such as *indicate* in this case.

The qualitative analysis further observed that the use of *indicate* as Pronounce shares some similarities in the types of signal for contractive force with the use of *suggest* as Pronounce, for instance:

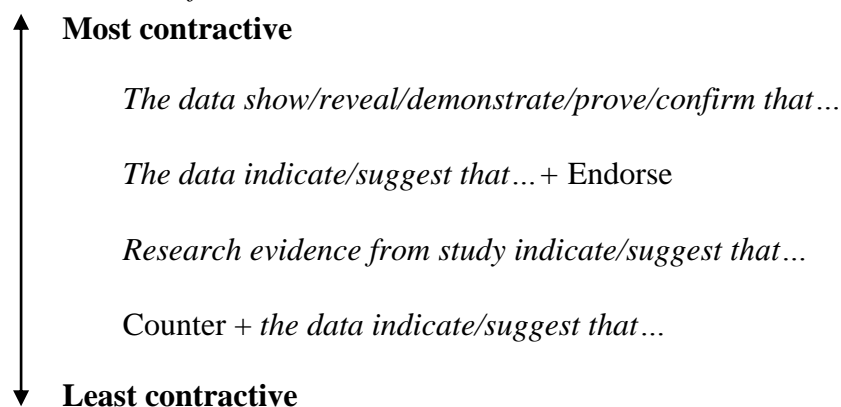
80. As stated in chapter 2, the concept of learner autonomy has different emphases in the literature, with ‘Western’ and ‘Chinese’ features, some of which seemed to be mutually exclusive. **However, data findings in the present study strongly indicated that** such a sharply drawn distinction was unwarranted... (J, 2007: 280)
81. One common misconception often expressed at this research site is that it is expected that anyone who has a PhD has a sound conceptualization of EAW by virtue of having completed the writing of their thesis. **Evidence from this study indicates that** this is not the case within this EFL research context. (G, 2008: 256)

In example 80, the dialogic contractive option Counter (**However**) was first used to signal the author’s different finding from literature; the up-scaled Graduation (*strongly*) seems to further reduce the degree that the author allowed for negotiating with other views. The co-articulation with Counter and Graduation: up-scale therefore potentially works to make the expression **data findings in the present study strongly indicated that...** function as Pronounce which insists on the authorial proposition. In example 81, evidence from the author’s own study, which seems to function similarly to research nouns in

Charles' (2006) as explained above, is used as warranty for the authorial view and thus *indicate* in this instance functions more as Pronounce rather than Entertain.

I will return to instances of *indicate* as Entertain in the next section (see 8.2.2). What has been discussed until now are realizations of Pronounce by use of reporting verbs and how some non-congruent realizations (e.g. *the data suggest/indicate...*) achieved the function of Pronounce. It seems that all the realizations can be placed on a continuum between most contractive (congruent realizations) and least contractive (non-congruent realizations), adopting White's (2001a) view of all Engagement resources as locating along a cline between most contractive and least contractive (also see 8.1).

Figure 8.1 *Continuum between Most Contractive and Least Contractive Realizations of Pronounce*



The rationale for this ordering is that: the reporting verbs in the first row from Figure 8.1 can be viewed to a similar extent to the meaning of having some proof, and therefore are considered to be more dialogic contractive Pronounce.

Parkinson's (2011) analysis of Mental and Verbal Processes as expressions of proof for knowledge claims in the discussion sections of research articles and students' laboratory reports also found "stronger indications of proof such as *show* (meaning *prove*), *confirm*, *demonstrate*, and *mean*" (p. 171). By contrast, *indicate* and *suggest* may be less strong words. As Johns' (2006) has analyzed, *indicate* seems to have a degree of ambiguity which may be closer in meaning to *suggest* or closer in meaning to *show/demonstrate*. On the other hand, Johns' (2006) argued that the meaning of *suggest* often implies "the marking of modality in the *that*-clause" and explained that the two sentences "These results suggest that X is." and "These results suggest that X may be Y." are "virtually identical" (p. 57). Therefore, although expression such as *the data indicate/suggest that...* may invoke some expectation of alternative views, the co-articulation with *Endorse* (see the second row in Figure 8.1) makes the dialogic space for such views minimal. A similar finding comes from Parkinson (2011) where the author noted an example of strong claim by means of *show* is referred to a consistent result in previous literature, which signals "some acceptance by the research community" as the fact of being published (p. 171).

The expressions *research evidence from the study indicate/suggest that...* may be considered as even less contractive for reasons that: 1) thesis writers' own research data provides extra support to the knowledge claims; 2) since such

research evidence has not been verified by other research and not been published yet, it may be argued that support from own data seems to be less warrantable than support from published work and thus the contractive force by research evidence is not as strong as that by Endorse. Therefore, these formulations *research evidence from the study indicate/suggest that...* appear to give some more dialogic space for discussing authorial propositions. The fourth type expression *Counter + the data indicate/suggest that...* in Figure 8.1, as it is neither co-articulated with Endorse nor research evidence and is by use of less strong words of *indicate/suggest*, it perhaps can be seen as the least contractive realization of Pronounce in this corpus. As Charles (2006) has proposed, the use of reporting verbs to present claims about writers' own work is another important role that these verbs play, but less research has examined this role than that on their role in referencing to previous work. The discussions presented above therefore can fill this gap to some degree.

8.2.2 Making dialogic expansive authorial claims – use of Entertain

Section 8.2.1 has presented the use of Pronounce to make dialogic contractive authorial claims about research findings and discussed both congruent and non-congruent realizations of Pronounce. This section analyzes the use of Entertain which occurred far more frequently than that of Pronounce

(see 7.1.1). The qualitative analysis first found that modal auxiliaries still are the most often used realizations of Entertain. There are 508 instances of modal auxiliaries in the corpus including *can* (n=26), *could* (n=84), *may* (n=237), *might* (n=101), and *would* (n=61), which make up approximately half of the total instances of Entertain. This result is in line with Gabrielatos and McEnery's (2005) finding about the density of central modals (*can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *would*) as epistemic markers in Masters dissertations by both L1 English speakers and speakers of a range of different L1s.

Another finding is that modal adjuncts such as *possible* are the second most frequently occurring type of linguistic realizations of Entertain. The analysis found that there are 116 instances of 8 different modal adjuncts (*perhaps*, *possible*, *possibly*, *probable*, *probably*, *potential*, *potentially*, and *presumably*) that were found to function as Entertain.

Table 8.5 *Number of Occurrences and Frequencies per 1,000 words of Realizations of Entertain by Modal Adjuncts*

	Frequencies per 1,000 words		Raw counts	
	L ₁ C	L ₁ E	L ₁ C	L ₁ E
Perhaps	0.04	0.6	2	40
Possible-(ly)	0.6	0.3	33	22
Probable-(ly)	0.04	0.08	2	5
Potential-(ly)	0.01	0.12	1	8
Presumably	0	0.06	0	4

As can be seen from Table 8.5, the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpora showed a relatively similar range of modal adjuncts as Entertain, except the absence of

presumably in the L₁C sub-corpus. Moreover, compared to the L₁C sub-corpus, the L₁E sub-corpus has more occurrences of 6 modal adjuncts as Entertain (*perhaps, probable, probably, potential, potentially, and presumably*), but the differences in the numbers of almost all these instances between the two sub-corpora are not very large.

However, the only exception and an interesting finding is the sharp difference in the number of *perhaps*. Table 8.5 shows that in the L₁C sub-corpus the item *perhaps* was rarely used with only 2 instances, but was much more often used in the L₁E sub-corpus with 40 instances. The frequency of *perhaps* per 1,000 words in the L₁E sub-corpus is in fact 15 times more than that in the L₁C sub-corpus. This finding reflects Gabrielatos and McNery's (2005) observation of a statistically significant difference in the frequency of *perhaps* between the L1 and L2 English speaker sub-corpora of Masters dissertations from similar disciplines (Linguistics and English Language) as this study. Gabrielatos and McNery (2005) suggested that the labeling of *perhaps* as informal language by pedagogical materials such as the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English may cause the L2 English speakers hesitate to use it as a modality marker. The current study showed that these L2 doctoral students still seemed to be reluctant to use *perhaps* as a way of making dialogic expansive propositions. It is possible that the pedagogical influence on the L2 speakers lasts even when they have

proceeded to a higher level of education. Nevertheless, both Gabrielatos and McEnery (2005) and this research seem to suggest that L1 speakers do use *perhaps* relatively frequent in academic writing. As Stubbs (2007) stated, “The frequent occurrence of lexical or grammatical patterns in a large text collection is good evidence of what is typical and routine in language use” (p.130).

Admittedly, the relatively frequent use of *perhaps* found in the current corpus may need to be validated by the analysis of *perhaps* as Entertain in a larger corpus, which could be a point of departure for further discussion on this issue. If this result is corroborated by future research, there may need to be some modification of the use of *perhaps* in some academic writing materials.

In addition to the above findings about linguistic realizations of Entertain, the qualitative analysis observed the phenomenon of the double use of Entertain when the 12 authors made propositions. The analysis found 52 such instances in the whole corpus, for example in excerpt 82:

82. The notion of the ‘discourse community’ put forward by Swales (1990), and also utilised by Byrnes to describe the readership of the MLJ, (e.g. p. 474) might reasonably be applied to the ELT Journal readership in the same way... **It seems possible that** by examining semantic change in professional discourse it **might be possible** to trace –or at least characterise –the emergence of such discourse communities as they seek to develop vocabularies suited to their purpose. (HT, 2009: 261)

The author used the co-articulation of **seem** with **possible** and that of **might** with **possible** when he made an argument about the role of examining

semantic change in professional discourse. It cannot be identified in this study why those authors chose to write in this way, but the effect of expanding a dialogic space for alternative views was reinforced by means of double use of Entertain. Thus, the authorial proposition as in example 82 is represented as highly contingent on the writer's own subjectivity, which is still open to discussion.

Another type of the double use of Entertain is the co-articulation of Entertain with some reporting verbs that are likely to be associated with the function of Entertain. The analysis found 15 instances of such co-articulation in this corpus (*suggest* n=9, *indicate* n=5, and *speculate* n=1). As shown in the two examples 83 and 84 below, the linguistic realization of **seemed to** is co-articulated with the reporting verb *suggest* and *indicate*.

83. The above discussed challenge of developmental stage to one's motivation is centred on the 'time' element... However, the findings of this research **seemed to suggest** that the 'context' element played a more important part in explaining learners' motivational 'ups and downs'. (L, 2007: 272)
84. Thirdly, individual differences between the informants also explain why overgeneralizing in this area would be a mistake – variables such as years of teaching, years after return from overseas, years of being abroad, and level of teacher education overseas all play a part here. The findings **seemed to indicate** differences between pre-experience and post-experience informants as well as between degree obtainers and visiting scholars in terms of evaluations of the effectiveness of overseas experience of teacher education. (X, 2009: 263)

It has been emphasized many times in this whole thesis (see 5.2, 6.2, 6.4) that any linguistic item can only be assigned with a particular Appraisal function dependent on its co-text. The previous section discussing the uses of Pronounce has presented examples of *suggest* and *indicate* which function as Pronounce and explained why they have the rhetorical effect of Pronounce in terms of their specific co-text. Although it is true that the two reporting verbs (*suggest* and *indicate*) can sometimes have the function of Pronounce, it also seems true that both items have, in Hoey's (2005) term, "pragmatic association" with Entertain. According to Hoey' (2005) theory of lexical priming, this means that *suggest* and *indicate* are more likely to be used to realize Entertain by many language users. After all, Martin and White (2005) have categorized *suggest* as realization of Entertain in Appraisal theory and Hyland (2005) also categorized both *suggest* and *indicate* as realizations of Hedges, although all the authors emphasized the variability of these items dependent on co-text. For these reasons, examples such as *seem to suggest* and *seem to indicate* are also considered to be double use of Entertain. It can be argued that the co-articulation with the congruent realization of Entertain (*seem to*) helps to mark the author's dialogic expansive positioning towards other divergent views even more overtly.

In addition to the double use of Entertain where two realizations are used in sequence, the qualitative analysis further observed a third type where

meanings of Entertain are separately encoded in the main and subordinate

constituents of a matrix clause, for example 85:

85. The first type is the influences from the society, which are referred to as the macro contextual influences by Dörnyei (2001c:161). **The findings suggest that** such society-level influences such as the standardised exams imposed by the government **may** determine teachers' attitudes toward the courses which may in turn influence the way they teach in the classroom such as adopting a monotonous or vivacious teaching style; or stressing the importance of exams or practicality of English in class. (W, 2010: 191)

The author first expressed her dialogic expansive positioning towards potentially different interpretations of her findings by means of Entertain, which was realized by the expression of **The findings suggest that...** in the main clause. In the subordinate clause, the author continued to encode the interpersonal meaning of Entertain by the modal auxiliary **may**. As a result, the authorial proposition being advanced is represented to the greater extent as being grounded on the author's own data and on her own interpretation. There is large dialogic space being allowed for others to negotiate with this proposition. This seems to be in contradiction with the research of Johns (2006) who studied the use of *indicate* in comparison with that of *show* and *suggest* in articles from the journal Nature. According to Johns (2006), the executive editor of that journal advised writers to avoid the redundant use of *may* in that-clauses after *suggest*.

However, in the current data, there are 24 instances of using another realization of Entertain (*may*, *could*, *would*, *perhaps*, *possible*, and *possibly*) in

that-clauses after *suggest* (n=18) and *indicate* (n=6). Additionally, 14 out of these 24 instances are presented in a similar way to example 85 where the encoded meaning of Entertain in the main clause is based on the authors' own data. As reviewed in Chapter 2 (see 2.4), the deployment of interpersonal meanings in academic writing is widely acknowledged to be subject to disciplinary practice (Becher, 1989; Hyland, 2000; Parry, 1998, 2007; Samraj, 2004; Yakhontova, 2006). It can be assumed that these authors sometimes need to be more interpretative about their findings due to the recursive nature of knowledge construction in social science and thus may choose to highlight their dialogic expansive positioning by using additional Entertain in that-clause after *suggest* or *indicate*.

Different from the double use of Entertain discussed above, the qualitative analysis further noted a contrasting pattern where the dialogic expansive option Entertain was co-articulated with Concur or Pronounce, both of which are the opposite dialogic contractive options belonging to the less delicate level of Proclaim. In the whole corpus, there are 14 instances of the co-articulation of Entertain with Proclaim, as shown by the following two examples.

86. Meanwhile, Hannah's suggested alternative to appraisal observations would **certainly seem to** be **viable** and involve key players in the process, and could potentially be very effective in a tertiary learning situation (interview, turns 214, 216 and 218, Extract 6.1):... (HW, 2010: 235)

87. However, the impact of the OP on the research does not seem to have been significant in terms of the recordings of the pedagogic lessons [4.1.7]... It was also less apparent in the teacher interviews... However, it **did seem** that the OP was **perhaps** impacting on the supervisors during their interviews, in that they sometimes seemed to be saying what they felt they ought to say. (HW, 2010: 329-330)

In example 86, by the use of Entertain (**seem to**), the author presented her positive evaluation (**viable**) of Hannah's suggestions as but one of range of views, which constructs a high degree of authorial awareness and tolerance of other possible views in the ongoing communicative act. On the other hand, the use of Concur (**certainly**) functioned to construe the authorial evaluation as being shared with the actual or potential reader and therefore exerted a counter-productive impact on the rhetorical effect of Entertain. As a result, the actual space that the author allows for negotiating alternations becomes reduced and limited. In example 87, Entertain (**seem**) was co-articulated with Pronounce (**did**) when the author made an assertion about the effect of the OP (Observer's Paradox) on the supervisors during their interviews in her research. However, the further co-articulation with another Entertain (**perhaps**) appears to suggest that the author still expanded the dialogic space for other views on this issue. Martin and White (2005) illustrated a similar example from a newspaper and then made up two examples for comparison:

In fact it was **probably** the most immature, irresponsible, disgraceful and misleading address ever given by a British Prime Minister. [*Sunday Express*, 7/10/01] (105)

In fact it was **possibly** the most immature, irresponsible, disgraceful and misleading address ever given by a British Prime Minister. (106)

In fact it **may** have been the most immature, irresponsible, disgraceful and misleading address ever given by a British Prime Minister. (106)

Martin and White (2005) argued that the change of a “low-intensity modal forms” (e.g. *possible* and *may*) would not have altered the author’s “strong investment in the proposition” because of other Appraisal options that were co-articulated including the “assertiveness of the *in fact*” and the up-scaled Graduation of *most* (p. 106). As a result, Martin and White (2005) emphasized “the role of the co-text in conditioning the meanings” of Appraisal options (p. 106). Examples 86 and 87 also reflect both the authors’ deployment of types of Appraisal options in order to indicate their interpersonal positioning and make their arguments more convincing. From a pedagogical perspective, making such instances available to doctoral thesis writers or other novice writers may help them understand how real writers have used Appraisal options to make effective claims and thus let them reflect whether they would like to adopt similar ways in their research writing.

Another observation, similar to the double use of Entertain discussed earlier in this section, is the encoding of Entertain in subordinate clause but encoding of Pronounce in the main clause, for instance:

88. ...The other type of influences, which comes from the schools, is referred to as the microcontextual influences (Dörnyei’s *ibid.*:161). **The data of the present study reveal that** restrictions from the local context such as set

curricula or standardized textbooks assigned by the schools **may** generate negative teacher emotions like stress and frustration, and influence teachers' behaviours in the classroom such as giving the lectures in haste. (W, 2010: 192)

In example 88, the author made a strong proposition which is presented as revealed by her research data (**The data of the present study reveal that...**) and thereby permitted little space for others confront this view. However, the author then seemed to mitigate her contractive attitude by use of Entertain (**may**) in the subordinate clause, which actually expressed the content of the authorial proposition. The contracted dialogic space is therefore somehow expanded, which may prevent the author from being challenged by the potential reader who may disagree with the authorial view. The qualitative analysis found 49 instances of this type of co-articulation of Pronounce with Entertain in the whole corpus, 30 instances out of which the linguistic realization of Pronounce encoded in main clause is based on the authors' own data.

In contrast to this "objective" type of realization of Pronounce (Martin & White, 2005, p. 130), the qualitative analysis also observed the "subjective" type of realization.

89. Despite the regularity with which contributors attempt to remould communicative ideas in the Journal, **I believe that it is possible to** discern an underpinning, even unifying theme that extends across the Rossner period of the corpora. (HT, 2009, p.245)

In example 89, the expression **I believe that...** is subjective realization of Pronounce as “the speaker/writer’s subjective role in making the assessment is overtly announced” (Martin & White, 2005, p.130). However, there are only 10 instances of subjective realization of Pronounce in the whole corpus. The fact that the number of objective realizations (n=30) is more than twice as many as that of subjective realizations (n=9) seems to suggest that the authors in this study preferred to base their pronouncement on evidence from research data.

8.3 Ambiguous uses of Appraisal options

In Chapter 6, I explained the coding principles of the corpus and coding decisions of all the options in Figure 6.6. During the coding process, I actually encountered some uses of Appraisal options that are difficult to code based on those principles. As a result, I decided to label such items as uncodable, noting also that they may be pedagogically interesting in terms of what the ambiguities are. This section focuses on a discussion of the uncodable items in the corpus and their potential pedagogical benefits to doctoral thesis writers and perhaps other novice research writers as well.

8.3.1 Uncodable items of ambiguous voice

The whole corpus contains 16 uncodable items in total (in the L₁C sub-corpus n=9 and in the L₁E sub-corpus n=7). A qualitative analysis of these

items found that one type of ambiguity is concerned with the voice of a proposition, and there are 4 instances in this corpus, for example:

90. Fourth, the ability to monitor the learning process... It seems that the nature of such a capacity lies in two psychological constructs: ‘attention’ and ‘reflection’ as argued by Benson (2001: 94). (J, 2008: 277)

In example 90, it is quite difficult to make clear whether the expansive voice being realized by Entertain (*It seems that...*) is attributed to the thesis writer or Benson (2001). Similarly, in example 91:

91. In the traditional Hong Kong classroom catering for individual learner differences has not been emphasised to any great extent (3.2.3)...In traditional Chinese culture, there is however a belief in individual self-development, albeit so as to contribute to the common good (Lau, 1979) (C, 2001: 286)

The contractive voice being realized by Counter (*however*) could be attributed to the author or Lau (1979), and it seems unlikely to make sure which one it actually is. Such ambiguity of voice appears to be caused by each author’s way of in-text citation. In the two examples, reference to Benson (2001) and that to Lau (1979) were both placed at the end of the propositions being advanced. If example 90 is re-written as follows, the reference to Benson (2001) prior to the whole proposition would signal the meaning of Entertain (*it seems that*) is attributed to Benson rather than the thesis writer.

As Benson (2001: 94) argued, it seems that the nature of such a capacity lies in two psychological constructs: ‘attention’ and ‘reflection’.

Harvey (2008) advised students that: “Never leave your reader in doubt as to when you are speaking and when you are relying on material from a source” and suggested that one way of avoiding ambiguity about which ideas are the author’s and which ideas are the source’s is “announcing the source in your own sentence or phrases preceding its appearance” (p. 18). The observation about the uncodable items of ambiguous voice would support Harvey’s (2008) suggestion of signaling the source before actually quoting or paraphrasing it.

8.3.2 Uncodable items of ambiguous positioning with source

The second type of uncodable items is concerned with the ambiguity of stance. The qualitative analysis found 12 instances of this type in the corpus, which appear to have something to do with inappropriate citation. Including examples from 92 to 94 presented below, there are in total 4 such uncodable items in the corpus. As in example 92, the author was discussing her finding about how teachers in her study conducted evaluations of teaching materials.

92. ...but even though teachers are aware of the importance of conducting in-use and post-use evaluation, and also provide some practical suggestions according to their experience (see sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.3), they do not conduct these evaluations systematically and/or in a formal way in these two phases; instead, they tend to ‘rely on impressionistic holistic judgments rather than evidence’ (McGrath, 2002:180). (HG, 2011: 199)

When the author explained what those teachers actually did, she directly quoted McGrath (2002). However, this citation seems inappropriate in that McGrath (2002) would be unlikely to comment on the teachers' performance in this thesis writer's study. The reference to Dörnyei (2001c) and that to Sheal (1989) in example 93 and 94 seem to have a similar problem in that both were cited to discuss findings about the two thesis writers' research.

93. ...In the pilot learner interview, I found that rather than communicating with the teacher about their needs, these learners chose to live 'down' to the teacher's expectation (Dörnyei 2001c). (W, 2010: 189)
94. Another problem identified in the research is that observers can appear to 'pay lip service' to observation as PD (Sheal, 1989:102), in that they see themselves as telling the teachers how to teach effectively, rather than working with them to gain mutual understanding. (HW, 2010: 319)

It could be assumed that these writers may try to use previous research with similar finding as support for their own results. In other words, the reference to McGrath (2002), Dörnyei (2001c) and Sheal (1989), respectively, may be intended to be used as Endorse so as to make authorial proposition more convincing like some examples presented in 8.1.3. However, these authors' way of citation appears to be inappropriate and thus may cause ambiguity in authorial stance towards the external source.

The qualitative analysis also observed another 3 instances, the ambiguity of which lies in whether the proposition being advance is from the cited source or

whether the source is simply an example of the authorial proposition, for

instance:

95. Motivation is not a stable emotional or mental state, though most relevant research has been based on the measure of it at some particular point of time (Dörnyei, 2001). (L, 2007: 271)
96. The freedom in learning that learners can exercise has always been a major concern of many autonomy advocates (e. g. Benson, 2001; 2006a). (J, 2008: 265)
97. It seems to me that a great deal of our TESOL professional discourse is unnecessarily dichotomous and oppositional in character (see Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008 in this connection)... (M, 2012: 251)

For example 95, the reference to Dörnyei (2001) seems to be ambiguous with respect to whether Dörnyei (2001) is just an example of research based on the measure of motivation at a particular point of time or Dörnyei (2001) is the source of the proposition that most relevant research has been based on the measure of motivation at a particular point of time. As a result, it would be hard to identify whether or not the author was endorsing Dörnyei (2001).

Similar to the above three uncodable items, there are 5 other instances which involves an ambiguity in whether the proposition is attributed to an external source or whether only the quoted expressions are attributed to that source, for example:

98. Students' awareness of its importance becomes clearer as they go through advancing 'developmental stages' (Williams and Burden, 1997) as well. (L, 2007: 199)

99. In addition, once personal development motivation has been ‘internalised’, it gets very close to ‘intrinsic motivation’, which is seen to be an ideal state of learning (Deci and Ryan, 2002). (L, 2007: 200)

As in example 98, the author cited Williams and Burden (1997), however, it cannot make clear whether only the term “developmental stages” is from the reference or whether the proposition about students’ awareness of the importance of “quality education” (L, 2007, p. 199) is attributed to Williams and Burden (1997). In example 99, whether the two terms “internalised” and “intrinsic motivation” are sourced to Deci and Ryan (2002) or whether the whole proposition is sourced to this reference also seems ambiguous. In the two examples, if only the quoted expressions are attributed to the citations, it would be expected to see specific page numbers of these quotations according to the academic citation convention. Both the APA (American Psychology Association) and MLA (Modern Language Association) websites clearly state the principle for providing page numbers of direct quotations.

In summary, this chapter has explained the patterns of the authors’ engagement with previous literature while discussing their own research findings. Section 8.1 presented a number of examples from the current corpus which showed the three main types of interpersonal positioning (disaligned, neutral, and aligned) that the authors can take towards the literature and explained the frequently occurring co-articulations with the Appraisal options

that construct the three types of stance. Analyses and explanations in section 8.1 have shown different patterns of co-articulations with Distance, Acknowledge, and Endorse according to authorial propositions about their research findings. The analysis found a preference for the combination of Distance and Pronounce across the two sub-corpora. This indicates that when the 12 writers chose to disalign themselves from previous literature and made claims about different findings they tended to present their claims in a dialogic contractive voice so as to fend off the reader who might have doubt (see 8.1.1). In contrast, the analysis revealed a preference for the combination of Endorse and Entertain across the two sub-corpora. It seems that when the 12 writers discussed findings similar to existing knowledge they tended to present their claims in a dialogic expansive voice and then to align themselves with previous literature which functioned as support to their own propositions (see 8.1.3). Moreover, the analysis observed that even when the authors adopted a dialogically neutral positioning towards previous literature realized by Acknowledge they tended to show an invoked alignment or disalignment often realized by Bare Assertion or Entertain which points out the positive or negative connection between the literature and the authors' own findings (see 8.1.2).

Section 8.2 closely discussed the qualitative results of Appraisal options and their linguistic realizations that were used to present the authors'

propositions about their own findings. The results showed that in this genre reporting verbs and clauses with research products or processes (e.g. *data*, *results*, *analysis*) as subjects seem to be the most frequently occurring realizations of Pronounce. More importantly, the qualitative analysis found that certain reporting verbs such as *suggest* which is generally associated with the function of Entertain may not always realize that function, depending on particular co-articulations with other Appraisal options and co-text (see 8.2.1). The analysis of the use of Entertain observed that modal verbs are still the most frequently used realizations by these doctoral writers. The results further showed the tendency to the double use of Entertain which is often realized by combinations of two realizations of Entertain (e.g. *seem possible*) or by encoding the values of Entertain separately in the main and subordinate constituents of matrix clause (see 8.2.2). This use seems to greatly expand the dialogic space for other views and present the authorial propositions to the greater extent as being grounded on their interpretation, which may be constrained by the nature of knowledge construction in social science. At the end, the chapter also presents some ambiguous uses of Appraisal options that may cause difficulty in identifying the authorial interpersonal stance. All the corpus-based examples and the analyses can be pedagogically useful to raise student writers' awareness of strategic deployment of interpersonal language so that they can better discuss

their own findings while critically engaging with relevant literature. The next chapter presents a small-scale pedagogical trial of using these corpus-based findings with Masters students at CAL, Warwick University and reports my observations of the trial and the students' feedback.

Chapter 9 Small-scale pedagogic trial of corpus-based findings

This chapter describes two sessions with the Masters students at CAL, Warwick University in which they were presented with some of my corpus-based findings and involved in a series of tasks. It first explains the purpose and organization of the sessions (9.1) and then discusses some interesting observations during the sessions (9.2). At the end, it presents the participants' evaluation about the two sessions (9.3).

9.1 Purpose and organization

As explained in Chapter 2 (see 2.7), corpus-based language teaching and learning has the potential to raise learners' awareness of the target language structure and pattern through exploration of corpus data. Although my results about the use of interpersonal language are based on doctoral theses, the Masters students were selected as they were writing their dissertations at the time when I finished the qualitative analysis and observed interesting deployment of Appraisal options that were used to make reference to previous literature and the author's own research findings and therefore reflect different authorial stance towards the two aspects. The content still seems to be relevant to these students, since writers at the Masters level also need to perform this rhetorical task.

Furthermore, the way of taking an authorial stance towards other research and of making authorial claims with appropriate degree of certainty are commonly reported as problematic areas for novice writers (see 2.6). This initial pedagogic application of my corpus-based findings accordingly was conducted in order to make the Masters students aware of different strategies for achieving the two rhetorical effects in writing theses/dissertations.

For this purpose, two sets of materials were designed. Set 1 is a PowerPoint file which presents information about Appraisal options for taking an interpersonal stance in the discussion section of a thesis/dissertation, the likely effect of different choices, and the corpus-based findings about the most frequent patterns of using these options. Set 2 contains 5 different tasks with an increasing degree of complexity, using a list of authentic examples extracted from my corpus for each task (see Appendix). All extracts were first selected by me and then discussed with my supervisor in order to ensure that they are transparent enough for the students. Task 1 is to identify authorial stance towards previous literature while Task 2 is to identify authorial stance towards own research. The remaining three tasks are more complex and require students to deal with longer extracts which combine authorial stance towards both other's and own research. For example, in Task 3 students looked at extracts that showed the combination

of the authorial voice of research results and the literature from which the authorial voice is distanced (see Appendix).

During the two sessions, the students were asked to fulfill these tasks based on the handout that contains targeted language patterns generated by the specialized corpus of the present research. Therefore, they did not work directly on the computer and explore the patterns of stance-taking in this corpus, and this type of data-driven learning would be seen as a weaker version as opposed to a stronger version of DDL which would make learners directly access to corpora in order to investigate language problems by themselves (Thompson, 2006).

Before each task, the students were also given simple instructions on the types of authorial stance that they need to identify, for instance in Task 2: “In these extracts, writers are talking about their own research. In each case, do you find their stance more tentative, or more assertive?” (see Appendix). This ensured that they had some appropriate metalanguage with which to discuss the extracts. After they completed each task and discussed their opinions, they were given more explanations about the rhetorical purposes of using different authorial stances in that task in light of Appraisal theory and about the distribution of those stances in the current corpus.

Two sessions were finally organized on 9 and 10 June, 2014. A letter of invitation was first circulated among the Masters students email group before the

sessions (see Appendix). 4 and 10 students attended the first and second session, respectively. My supervisor delivered both sessions in order that I could sit in the classroom as an observer, concentrating on the students' reactions. The sessions were recorded, and the students were asked to fill out an evaluation form at the end of a session. All recordings and forms were used only as research data for discussing the students' questions about and comments on the content presented. This is treated as a subsidiary data source for the present study which was not analyzed in great detail but commented on in more general terms. For ethical reasons, students are referred to by letters, for example student A (SA), student B (SB) and student C (SC) and so on.

9.2 Observations of the sessions

A general observation is that both groups of students seemed to have acquired a good level of awareness of taking an authorial stance while reviewing literature or discussing own findings. They seemed to have no difficulty in identifying authorial stance in all five tasks, although they showed different degree of consensus on the stance that was expressed in different extracts. Moreover, most of them tended to rely on reporting verbs in the extracts as linguistic clues for identifying a particular stance. However, some students mentioned the issue of context while commenting on some extracts. The following section presents in detail my observations of the two sessions.

For Task 1, the first group of students reached consensus on the authorial stance towards the literature only in two examples but showed divergent views on three examples (1, 4, and 5). On the other hand, the second group reached consensus on the stance expressed in all five examples except the fourth one. As can be seen, both groups did not share the same opinion about the stance expressed in example 4, which is:

4. ...or as Morris (1999a) points out, ED's conception focused more on creating a standard curriculum product that was to be provided to schools for implementation.

In group 1, most students viewed the authorial stance as neutral towards the literature, but one student also pointed out the possibility of a stance of alignment. In group 2, some students viewed the stance as aligned, some viewed it as neutral but more towards aligned, and some viewed it as neutral. Student A's comment indicated her consideration of the role of co-text that plays in interpreting the authorial stance:

because of the *or*, you don't know they're putting one point and then showing the opposite... (SA, 9 June 2014)

Student L's comment showed his understanding of the reporting phrase *point out* as having positive connotation and therefore he identified the authorial stance as aligned with previous literature.

I would always say points out has a positive connotation. It's powerful as opposed to a more neutral thing kind of stance... (SL, 10 June 2014)

The two groups also raised question about and made interesting comments on example 5:

5. ...the sweeping assessment presented by Hu (2002, 2005) that cultural resistance has served as a key factor in hindering CLT promotion in the Chinese EFL setting.

Both groups asked about the meaning of *sweeping*, which suggests this item as key linguistic evidence for identifying authorial stance towards the cited research. The word seems to assume a negative association when it is collocated with statements or generalizations as explained in The COBUILD English for Learners Dictionary: “If someone makes a **sweeping** statement or generalization, they make a statement which applies to all things of a particular kind, although they have not considered all the relevant facts carefully” (original emphasis, online version, retrieved on 25 August 2014). However, student A considered the authorial stance as disaligned and expressed her understanding of *sweeping* in a sport context where the word is believed to describe something positive. Conversely, student L expressed a contrasting view that sees *sweeping* as quite negative.

what does sweeping mean here? ...I would thought it was aligned, don't know if it's just fine because I was also confused by sweeping... I related it to a context, actually in sport where if you sweep someone, you win all of the games. (...?) overarching, like, none, there's no disagreement with your final results, that's all I see as positive. That's why I labeled alignment. (SA, 9 June 2014)

I found it quite negative. There's something, I don't know, about sweeping has that sort of negative, they are so high marks that they are just sweeping... (SL, 10 June 2014)

These comments suggest how the same word is “primed” (see 8.2.2)

differently for the two students for use in discourse. Student A's comment suggests the impact of a particular context in which one encountered the use of a word on the person's priming of this word in another context, where the same word may have a different semantic association and therefore may cause inappropriate use. It is therefore crucial to make writers to be sensitive about the context while using some interpersonal devices. The awareness of co-text is also crucial as *sweeping* can carry positive evaluation when it is collocated with other words such as *change*: “Sweeping changes are large and very important or significant. ⇒ The new government has started to make sweeping changes in the economy” (The COBUILD English for Learners Dictionary, online version, retrieved on 25 August 2014).

The implication for writers would be that it could be a mistake to rely too strongly on a particular lexical item to express a stance. When the writer and the reader hold divergent views on such items, effective communication of the writer's intended stance can be prevented. As a result, apprentice research writers need to be made aware of the semantic associations of stance-taking language in their disciplines so as to use them appropriately. The corpus-based findings

presented in Chapter 8 can help with this learning aspect at least for student writers in the discipline of ELT/Applied Linguistics.

One more interesting comment from student H in the second session is the question about the appropriateness of distancing oneself from the literature by indicating a negative attitude as in extract 5:

is it ok to (define) somebody else's work with such adjectives, appraisal?
[...] I know you have to take a stance, but I mean the word choice, you know that some words are more neutral than that one? (SH, 10 June 2014)

Her comment seems to reflect Parry's (1998) statement about the risk that doctoral students may take by making offensive judgments about their senior colleagues. Therefore, the more important question would be how novice writers can avoid being accused of making offensive judgments while disaligning themselves from previous researchers. The answer emerged from the current corpus is to co-articulate Distance with dialogic contractive options (e.g. Pronounce/Endorse) which can function to increase the interpersonal cost of anyone who might challenge the writer and thus reject the potentially disagreeing voice. In fact, the current corpus has revealed three main patterns of discussing the author's own results combined with critical engagement with previous literature, some typical examples of which have been presented in both sessions. It could benefit these students further if they in future can use the current corpus

to explore more examples of the patterns or other aspects of interpersonal language that they may have problem with.

Task 2, which was about identifying authorial stance towards their own finding, seemed to be easier for the students as both groups reached consensus on the stance expressed in all four extracts. As for Tasks 3 to 5, two students' comments are worth mentioning. One comment is about extract 3 in Task 3 which involves the combination of many Appraisal options:

3. ...strong will or persistence are often associated with Chinese culture by researchers such as Hu (2002), Jin and Cortazzi (1996). The present study provides no evidence for such a claim. Instead, the present study supports a contextualized understanding of concepts of learner autonomy that is suggested by researchers such as Aoki (2001) and Palfreyman (2003a).

During session 1, when students were asked about how the authorial voice achieved to pronounce their own findings while distancing itself from the literature, one student answered that:

assertive [...] by negating a previous thing, no such evidence, instead, and supports a different view [...] it's not their own research, but their referencing something else, (opposing) with different research, other research (SA, 9 June 2014)

Student A's analysis is consistent with the pattern of co-articulating Endorse with Distance identified in the current corpus (see 8.1.1). This comment indicates her high awareness of the way of arguing for own findings by the support of similar results found in other research. Student N even noticed the

tendency of different sequences of combining the writers' reference to literature and the writers' reference to their own findings:

as far as the organizations concerned, maybe distanc(ing) the literature review comes first and then research findings next. But in the immediate exercise the research findings come first and then it then presents supportive literature review. (SN, 10 June 2014)

This comment actually reflects one observation in the current corpus (see 8.1.3) that Endorse was more frequently used subsequent to than preceding the author's findings. However, a further observation made by the present study is that Endorse is more likely to be co-articulated with Entertain (see 8.1.3). Yet, it still implies that even from the analysis of several extracts this student appeared to be able to observe a tendency in the co-articulation of Endorse and other Appraisal options. As a result, it may be assumed that if the students can explore the use of interpersonal language in the current corpus they would benefit more through such direct data-driven learning, which is perhaps a starting point for designing an online pedagogical tool based on this corpus.

9.3 Participants' evaluation

The students provided an overall highly positive evaluation of the two sessions as indicated by their answers to the 7 Likert-scale questions that probe their opinions about mainly the topics, materials, tasks, and presentation of the session (see Appendix). All the 14 students (in fact 8 out of them strongly agreed) agreed that the topics covered were relevant to their needs. Almost all the

students (n=11) strongly agreed that the materials used were satisfactory and effective. One specific comment from a student stated “results found in the corpus research” included in the session as most useful for his/her writing. Other students pointed out, “seeing what PhDs have written – useful reference” and “It was good to get a sense of real practice through computer.” These comments are also consistent with the students’ evaluation of the materials.

Regarding the tasks in the session, 10 students strongly agreed and 4 agreed that they gained better understanding of the information presented in Material 1 (see 9.1) through analyzing examples in the tasks. Lastly, all students agreed and about 70% of them strongly agreed that the session enhanced their understanding of the options and strategies for discussing results of research. This evaluation also seems to be reflected by many students’ answers to question 8 about what was most useful for their writing (see Appendix). For example, they commented: “understanding a mix of stance is vital; considering verbs and how reader will interpret,” “how to bring other voices and our textual voice,” “reminded me that am I consciously avoiding certain stance,” “stance towards research findings,” and “understanding of different type of stance” etc. All these comments seem to suggest a good result of awareness-raising which may be beneficial to their writing of dissertation.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I conclude the thesis by evaluating this research, summarizing its overall findings, and discussing some of its contributions. It is admitted that any potential contribution will be grounded on the trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the research itself. Therefore, the first section presents the evaluation of this study from both the quantitative and qualitative strands that it involved.

10.1 Evaluation of this research

The quantitative strand of this research mainly depends on the reliability of the current corpus and the descriptive and inferential statistics (the frequency count of all Appraisal features in the corpus and the frequency comparison of each feature across the L₁C and L₁E sub-corpora). The reliability of quantitative data provided by a corpus depends on the corpus itself being reliable, which mainly concerns the issue of representativeness.

From a quantitative perspective, based on Flowerdew (2004), representativeness has to do with whether the current specialized corpus can yield sufficient instances of linguistic features under investigation. As shown by the two chapters of pilot and main coding, the functional analytical framework that I chose to use determines a data sensitive and co-text based manual annotation of all texts, which will necessarily require a large amount of time and thus constrains the

size of corpus. Despite this practical constraint, the current corpus yielded 7059 instances, – intuitively quite large – and two procedures were conducted to test the sufficiency of corpus size. As explained earlier (see 4.2.1.3), both procedures showed a reduction of corpus size in proportion to the reduction of items of Appraisal features, which can be seen as empirical evidence to justify the size of the current corpus.

Representativeness in this research has a qualitative dimension as well, which is to do with what sort of specialized domain of language it represents. This corpus contains discussion sections of doctoral theses written in the early 21st century by native speakers of Chinese and English at CAL, Warwick University. The corpus represents the language of thesis (particularly discussion section) writing in a single discipline and institution, which were deliberately selected in order to avoid the disciplinary and local institutional impact on the genre under investigation (see 2.4). Findings of the present research therefore can only be taken as statements about the language of interpersonal meaning-making within this particular setting but by no means about the language use by a general population of doctoral writers. Any finding based on this corpus therefore should not be overgeneralized, and this point is particularly made explicit later in this section where presents the evaluation of the transferability of this research. As McEnery, Xiao and Tono (2006) put forward, any corpus can only be as

representative as possible of the language under investigation and any conclusion drawn from a particular corpus should be treated with caution in order to avoid “unreasonable generalizations” (p. 73).

The qualitative strand of this research concerns the text-based part of analysis including the stability of the coding scheme, the consistency in the annotations of all items that realized the function of Appraisal, and the documentation of my coding process and findings. Additionally, it covers the small pedagogic strand regarding participants’ feedback about the sessions (see Chapter 9). These qualitative dimensions are evaluated by the key criterion of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which has four sub-criteria including “credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability” (p. 290). The following sections discuss how the qualitative inquiry that this research involved has satisfied the four criteria.

Credibility, in general, refers to whether or not the findings of an inquiry represent a true account of what is under study. Specific to the text-based strand of my research, credibility concerns the extent to which the findings genuinely reveal interpersonal meaning-making in discussion sections of doctoral theses in the discipline of ELT/Applied Linguistics at CAL, Warwick University. A valid account first relies on whether my selections of spans of text for coding, selections

of interpersonal language for coding, and all my annotations, are appropriate. The three issues were specifically addressed in Chapter 6.

As acknowledged in 6.2, a precise identification of some words and not others as fulfilling an interpersonal function in a given stretch of text is inevitably arbitrary to some extent in that interpersonal meaning is always dependent on co-text. However, my principle for selecting which span of text for coding was clearly stated in 6.2 and sufficient examples with the visual aid of the UAM CorpusTool screenshots were provided so that readers of this thesis can judge the appropriateness of my selections. As for the issue about which interpersonal language should be coded, the reasons for my selections were also explicitly documented in 6.3 with sufficient and transparent examples as well as clear explanations of those examples. All the information will allow readers of this thesis to examine whether my selections were justified.

The last issue, about whether my annotations were credible, is indeed more crucial for evaluating the credibility of my research. I would suggest a positive evaluation of annotations in terms of my “prolonged engagement” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301) with the data. I have worked on the data intensively at an average pace of one text per week at the main coding stage (a total time of 12 weeks). Every instance of coding was firmly grounded on Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005). The very nature of Appraisal as a functional theory also

demands from me a deep consideration of co-text when a span of text was assigned to a particular Appraisal category. Any problematic items encountered during both pilot and main coding stages were documented for discussion with my supervisor so as to work out principles for coding different types of such items and make agreement on coding.

Furthermore, when some items that both my supervisor and I were not able to figure out its exact interpersonal function, we did not force them into a given category within the Appraisal framework but rather acknowledged the existence of such items and classified them as uncodable (see 8.3). Detailed procedures of both pilot and main coding were fully reported in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 so that readers of my thesis can examine my whole process and determine its acceptability. With respect to all evidence presented above, I would suggest a positive assessment of my current work on the criterion of credibility.

Closely tied with credibility is the criterion of dependability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that, there can be “no credibility without dependability” (p. 316). Therefore, the arguments for the credibility of my research rest on the assumption that it has demonstrated dependability. For naturalistic inquiry, dependability concerns “the appropriate documentation of all emerging factors which can influence research conclusions” (Wharton, 1999, p. 222). For the current research, dependability has to do with the stability of my coding scheme

and the factors which can influence this stability and thus can change my annotations and results.

The stability of my coding scheme first was established through the pilot study (see Chapter 5) and then was tested and confirmed through the more intensive main coding. Although the coding scheme that was used during the pilot study (see Figure 6.6) was modified after pilot coding, this should not be seen as a matter of instability. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) contended,

...the naturalist is not willing to have charged off to his or her “unreliability” changes that occur because of changes in the entity being studied (a construction, remember) or because of changes in the emergent design as insights grow and working hypotheses appear. (299)

My revision of that coding scheme is a response to the inevitable change in my accumulative understanding of Appraisal theory and my own data. The inclusion of a new genre-specific Appraisal option did not jeopardize the stability of the coding scheme. Instead, it improved the reliability of the scheme in that the strategy for supporting authorial assertions by reference to the writers’ research data would not have become visible if the new option had not been added. Reasons for modifying the coding scheme as well as explanations and examples of this new Appraisal option were detailed in 6.4.9. Moreover, annotations of the two texts during the pilot were checked and changed according to the modified scheme with the assistance of the UAM CorpusTool so as to achieve consistent coding

throughout all texts in the corpus. I therefore would suggest that the dependability of my research can be positively evaluated in terms of the stability of the coding scheme and the consistency in coding.

Once the credibility and dependability of naturalistic inquiry are achieved, the third question to ask is about its transferability. Unlike the more controlled environment of a rationalistic inquiry, the setting of naturalistic inquiry is likely to expect more variables, which are stressed as the uniqueness of each situation.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that “context is crucial in deciding whether or not a finding may have meaning in some other context as well” (p. 39). Accordingly, what naturalistic inquiry aims to seek is not a strict generalization or identical replication of the findings. It sets out to “produce understandings of one situation which someone with knowledge of another situation may well be able to make use of” (Edge & Richards, 1998, p. 345). Sufficient information about the context under study thus needs to be presented in order to allow future inquirers to determine whether findings are potentially transferable and how far they can be transferred to another situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

For my text-based work, my description of the context of study (see 1.3 & 4.2.1.2) and of the genre of my data (see 2.5 and 4.2.1.4) can help readers of this thesis see difference or similarity between my context/data and those of their own so that they can decide whether my findings may have meaning in their situations.

Transferability also relates to the extent to which my findings about the deployment of Appraisal options in my corpus can have meaning in doctoral discussion sections in other disciplines or institutions or among writers of other L1s. Without sufficient knowledge about those “receiving contexts” where my findings may go to (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 297), I at present am not in the right position to make appropriate judgments on the potential transferability of those findings. With reference to previous literature which has found variations in making interpersonal meanings among disciplines (Abdollahzadeh, 2011; Hyland, 2010; Lee & Casal, 2014; McGrath and Kuteeva, 2012; Samraj, 2008; Vázquez and Giner, 2008), among writers of different L1s (Chen, 2010; Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2005; Hyland & Milton, 1997; McEnery & Kifle, 2002; Neff et al., 2003), and across institutions (Li & Wharton, 2012), it is necessary to remind researchers who may apply Appraisal theory to different data to carefully evaluate the extent to which the approach to analysis and the findings explained in the current research would be of any relevance or benefit to their own situations.

The fourth criterion of confirmability concerns whether all findings emerge from the data rather than from the predispositions of investigators (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For wholly quantitative corpus-based research, the issue of a researcher’s unreliability or preference may be less important, but it is critical for the current study in which the quantitative comparisons of Appraisal options

used across two sub-corpora were based on my interpretative annotations of each text. As explained earlier about the credibility of this study, all annotations were strictly made in light of Appraisal theory and intensive reading of their co-text. Section 6.4 has explained that it was not considered practical or appropriate to attempt to achieve inter-rater reliability, since this would necessitate two researchers who were equally immersed in the data and who had gone through the same process of developing their understanding of the Appraisal framework. However, any item that I found uncertain about coding was discussed with my supervisor, the person after me who is most familiar with the data, so as to gain another perspective and ensure as far as possible that coding decisions were principled and consistent. Records of these problematic items were kept and available to examiners of this thesis if they wish to see.

Secondly, Miles and Huberman (1994) argued that researchers' admission of their preference toward such as one approach to another is necessary. My descriptions of three main approaches to exploring the language of interpersonal meaning-making and of my decisions for using Appraisal theory (see 2.2) were clear responses to show that the selection of analytical framework did not result from any a priori predisposition but rather from my considered judgment about the suitability of the framework. Regarding the evidence presented above, I would suggest that my findings were arrived at via the data and are confirmable.

One more thing that needs to be evaluated is regarding some ethical issues of this research. What is relevant to the text-based part concerns my data collection procedure, use of the data, and representation of findings. As explained in 4.2.1, my data are collected from Warwick University's online archive of research articles and PhD theses, which are made available for research purposes with authors' permission. My main purpose to use the data is to study the general patterns of deploying Appraisal options in doctoral theses and explore the repertoire of Appraisal resources that these writers have. I did not use any individual text as an example of unqualified writing or to judge any author about his/her competence in English language or research. My reporting of findings only involves general features of usage of Appraisal language but does not involve any criticisms of any individual writer or writing. Furthermore, I was conscious of the issue of overgeneralization of my findings when presenting them so that researchers/practitioners who might have a chance to read this thesis will not be misled. As for the two sessions involving human participants, these Masters students were invited to attend the sessions on a voluntary basis. The recordings of participants' comments during sessions and their evaluations of the sessions were only used to see their feedback on part of my corpus-based findings which are potentially beneficial to their dissertation writing. For these reasons, I would suggest that my research can be ethically justified.

Overall, I would suggest that the quantitative strand of my research is valid in light of the representativeness of the corpus as a data set of language in doctoral theses produced in the context researched. I would also suggest that its qualitative strand is trustworthy in light of the stability of coding scheme and consistency in annotations as well as my thick descriptions of coding decisions and procedures. However, there are also, I acknowledge, some cautionary points to be made on this criterion. The first point has to do with the extent to which the co-text of each example was presented so that readers of the thesis can judge the appropriateness of my coding. Although I have tried to provide every example with what I considered as adequate co-text, future readers who may be less familiar with the complete text perhaps would see the information as inadequate to make a judgment. In this sense, access to my research data probably is less transparent. Second, it has to do with my selection of which part of a thesis as the discussion section. Although the main part of discussion of each thesis was selected, it is acknowledged that other chapters in a thesis might consist of small bits of discussion as well. Regarding this point, my data is not as exhaustive as possible.

10.2 Summary of findings and discussion of contributions

This section first recapitulates the main findings of this research. Then, based on the above positive evaluation of the trustworthiness of this research, it

discusses some contributions to certain areas in particular: the view of academic literacies that academic writing is not a first language deficit issue, an extension of the Appraisal framework by the identification of a genre-specific option, and a specialized corpus with annotations of Appraisal features that can be shared with and benefit other novice writers.

A general finding is that both the L1 Chinese and L1 English writers used a variety of Appraisal resources to deploy interpersonal meanings in similar ways while discussing their research results in doctoral theses. Specifically, Engagement resources were used much more frequently than Attitude and Graduation ones, and heteroglossic Engagement resources were preferred by both groups of writers. The findings indicate these writers' high interaction with the reader and with other views in their discourse community. Moreover, contractive Heterogloss was employed more often than expansive Heterogloss in the whole corpus. This pattern signals these writers' construal of the readership as holding potentially dissenting views and their tendency to shut off dialogic space for negotiating the arguability of their positions. This finding seems to be related to the tenor of student and examiner of this genre which can demand the need to argue against a critical reader (see 2.5). Regarding resources for making reference to other research, this study has found that the contractive option of Endorse was preferred over the expansive option of Attribute (Acknowledge and

Distance). This suggests the 12 writers' construal of alignment with other published writers, which was generally found to function as support for the authorial propositions about findings. A surprising finding is that the L1 Chinese writers in this study used a little more Distance resources than did the L1 English writers. This observation in a sense refutes the view that Chinese writers' reluctance to critique and echoes Pilcher, Cortazzi, and Jin's (2011) argument against the assumption that all Chinese students have some "key traits of 'Chineseness'" such as "preserving and maintaining public image" (p. 308). In fact, the finding that the L1 Chinese writers in this research employed a large amount of Entertain counters the previous view which ascribed Chinese writers' tendency to overuse of strong assertions to Chinese rhetoric as favoring such style (e.g. Chen, 2010).

On the whole, the two sets of writers displayed similar linguistic behaviors in using interpersonal language. As shown by the inferential statistics of this research, no significant difference was found in the normalized frequency of Appraisal features used by the L1 Chinese and L1 English writers. Although editing by doctoral students' supervisors may play a role in this result, it presumably applies to both sets of writers. Despite this issue, this main finding seems to be important by itself. It contrasts many previous studies which usually adopted the deficit perspective on second language writing and found

weaknesses in using interpersonal language by L1 Chinese writers (see 2.3). The empirical evidence gained from this research suggests that at the highest level of education writers' first language may not exert as much impact on academic writing as it does on writers' at lower education level. This group of L1 Chinese writers seemed to have developed command of evaluating other research and making their own propositions in a way that the English academic discourse community finds acceptable. Both this group and that of the L1 English writers can be seen as "academically literate" (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158) in terms of deploying interpersonal language.

Secondly, the application of Appraisal theory to discussion sections of doctoral theses in ELT/Applied linguistics has uncovered an option that seems to be specific to this part-genre. As explained in 6.4.9, this study noted that a type of expressions looked like bare assertions of reporting results in formulation but actually had a dialogic contractive function. Examples presented in 6.4.9 have shown how a specific reference to the author's research data acted to increase the arguability of the authorial proposition that was stated prior to the reference. Those examples also showed the dynamic construction of interpersonal meanings that can spread across clause boundary. It is in this aspect that the Justify-from-data option identified in this genre differs from White's (2010) categorization of Justify, which was explained to function within clause

boundary and present the author as advancing the current propositions so as to persuade those who might have doubts. Coffin (2002) raised the question about whether Appraisal theory has modeled “the semantic choices generally available in the culture” given its development through the exploration of genres in specific school domains and stated that this remains an open question (p. 520). The identification of the Justify-from-data option may at least give an answer that in the part-genre of discussion sections of doctoral theses Appraisal theory seems not to have mapped all semantic categories of interpersonal language.

The use of the authors’ own data to justify authorial propositions also can complement the suggestion from thesis writing guidebooks which focuses on using previous literature as justification (e.g. Oliver, 2004). Moreover, all the qualitative findings and particularly the corresponding examples given may contribute to the development of thesis writing guidebooks which usually lack specific and empirical examples of uses of interpersonal language (see 2.6). Some findings may even require textbooks to reconsider their explanations about the use of certain interpersonal items. For example, the discovery of the use of *perhaps* as Entertain in the current corpus (see 8.2.2) and the fact that all the writers in this corpus have passed their examination suggest the legitimacy of this use. It seems important for some guidebooks to note this tendency and be

more cautious when they advice writers to avoid using *perhaps* in academic writing (see 2.4).

The use of Justify-from-data and in fact the three main patterns of discussing the authors' own findings through various co-articulations of Appraisal options as shown in Chapter 8 can be pedagogically beneficial to novice writers who may need to be equipped with these linguistic resources to tackle the problems of constructing arguments with appropriate degree of directness and concession (e.g. Bloor and Bloor, 1991) and superficial engagement with relevant literature in discussion sections (e.g. Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006) (see 2.5). The comments and feedback from the participants of the two pedagogical trials of the corpus-based findings have indicated how small sessions like these can still make the students aware of different uses of interpersonal language that real thesis writers have taken by means of exploring a set of extracts from the corpus.

In this sense, another contribution of the current study is perhaps the annotated corpus itself. As stated in 4.3, annotation can give the original raw corpus additional linguistic information. Despite such information sometimes is inevitably interpretative, this information can be used not only by the annotator/analyst but also by others who may find it useful for their own purposes and can use it in various ways (Leech, 2005). Therefore, when the

current corpus is made available online, its annotation of interpersonal language can be exploited by novice writers or other researchers who want to investigate this linguistic feature in this genre. As Lee and Swales (2006) have found, doctoral students of non-native English speakers who participated in a corpus-based EAP course felt that exploration of academic writing in specialized corpora often provided them with exemplifications which are more close to their own situation of writing.

There have been researchers who have made their annotated corpus public, for example, Taboada's (2012) The SFU Review Corpus¹⁴, which contains both an English corpus and a Spanish corpus of movie, book, and consumer product reviews with annotations of Appraisal language. The website of this corpus provides links to the raw corpus and annotated corpus, documents about annotation schemes, and basic information about annotation tool, and the underlying theory on which the annotation was based. It is possible that in future the current corpus can also be presented on a website in a similar way to Taboada's (2012) practice so that it could benefit more novice writers who may need help with deploy interpersonal language in academic writing.

Specifically, a website that grants access to the public is planned to be designed as follows, as shown by the figures below from Figure 10.1 to Figure

¹⁴ http://www.sfu.ca/~mtaboada/research/SFU_Review_Corpus.html

10.5. The Homepage picture (see Figure 10.1) shows that this website overall will contain five sections including “the corpus, annotation scheme, UAM CorpusTool, Appraisal theory, and useful links.” It also has an introduction to my corpus and a link for visitors to download it. “The Corpus” tab will help future visitors learn the basic information about this corpus such as the size, genre, the context under which the texts were produced, the annotation tool, and the theory on which my annotation scheme was developed and annotations were made. The second tab, “Annotation Scheme,” as can be seen in Figure 10.2, shows my coding framework and some transparent examples of each Appraisal option in that model. With reference to these examples, it would be easier for visitors to understand the content of the “Appraisal Theory” page (see Figure 10.3) which briefly explains different functions of Appraisal options in the coding framework. As a result, they would better understand the use of such options in the annotated corpus, and then they can explore the patterns for using Appraisal options with assistance of UAM CorpusTool, which they can download from the link given in Figure 10.4. The website will also provide some references on the page about useful links where visitors can find relevant articles regarding Appraisal theory as well as instruction on using UAM CorpusTool to annotate texts. In this way, visitors who may need to code Appraisal options in other texts at least can have some guidance.



Figure 10.1 Screenshot of the Homepage of the Future Website about My Annotated Corpus

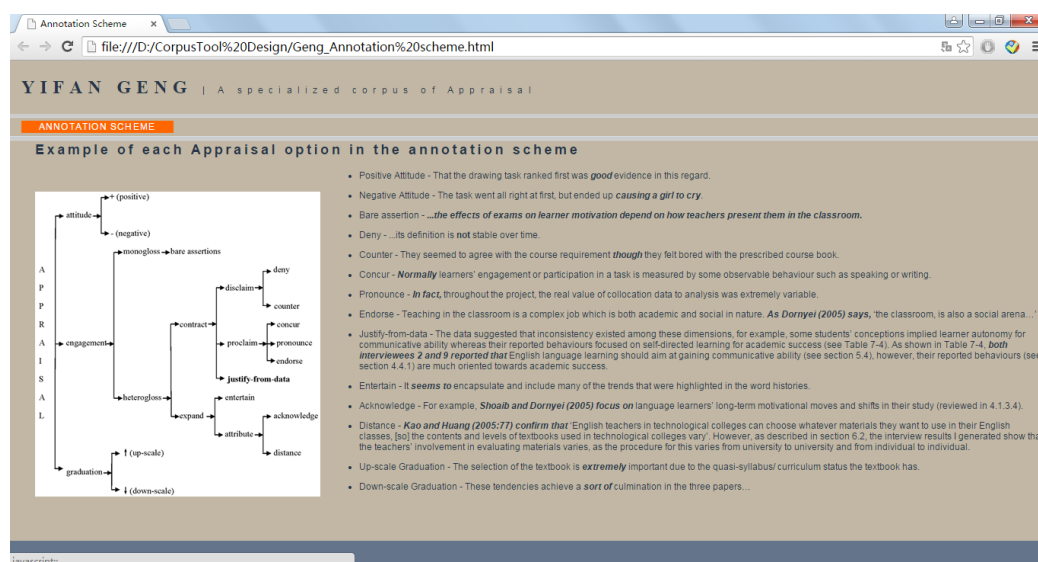


Figure 10.2 Screenshot of the Annotation Scheme Page of the Future Website about My Annotated Corpus



Figure 10.3 Screenshot of the Appraisal Theory Page of the Future Website about My Annotated Corpus

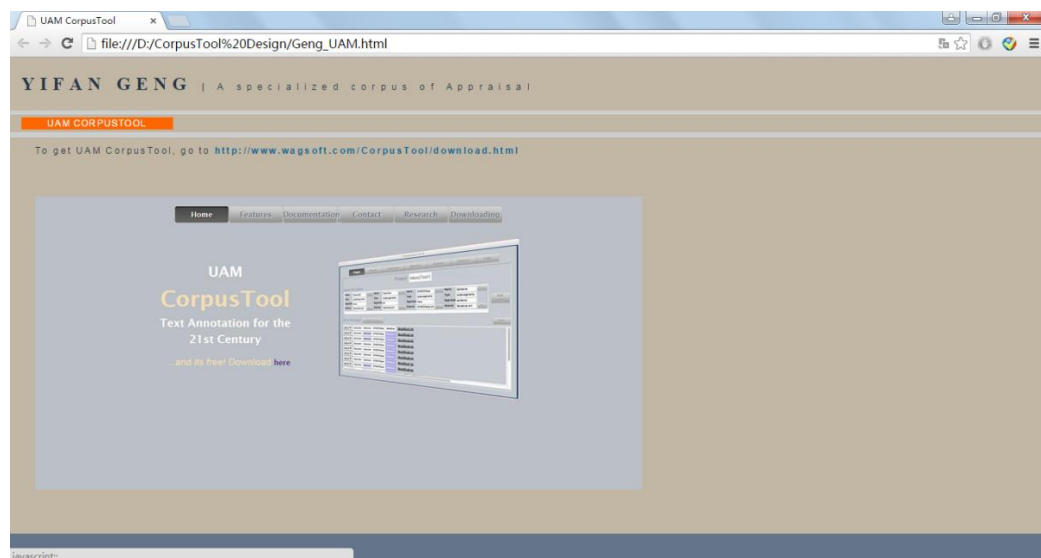


Figure 10.4 Screenshot of the UAM CorpusTool Page of the Furture Website about My Annotated Corpus

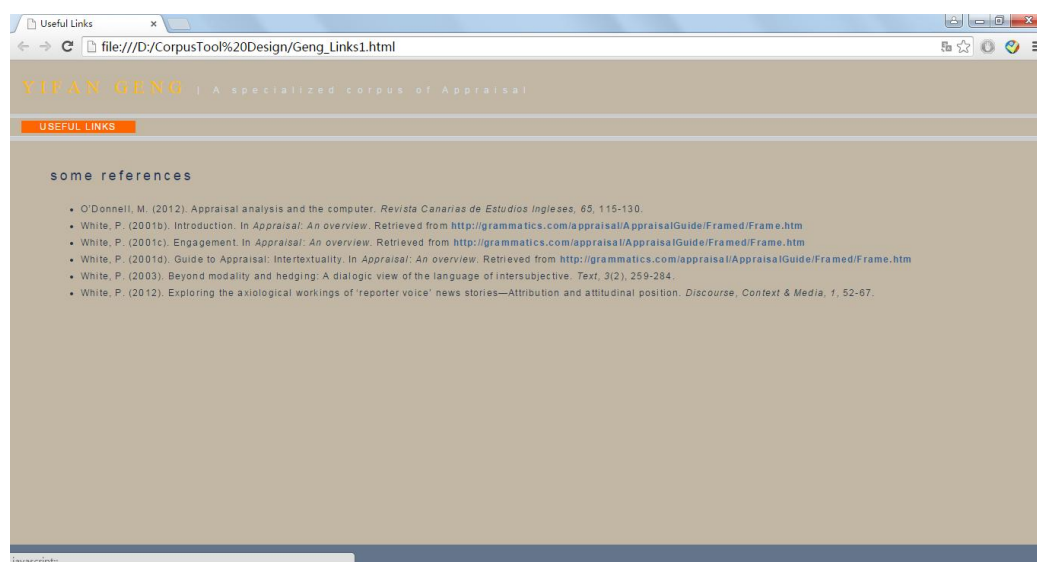


Figure 10.5 Screenshot of Useful Links Page of the Future Website about My Annotated Corpus

10.3 Future research possibilities and personal reflections

There are several future research possibilities to suggest given that this study has intentionally selected theses from the same discipline so as to avoid possible influence of different epistemology of different disciplines on the use of interpersonal language (see 1.2.1, 2.4, & 4.2.1.4). For example, future research could examine Appraisal features in theses from other disciplines from social science and compare with the current findings in order to see whether there are more differences or similarities and thus to see the possibility of drawing genre boundaries between some disciplines in the same “soft” domain. It may be also useful to examine Appraisal features in doctoral theses by L1 Chinese writers from the same discipline as those in this study, but from a different institution to

see whether the patterns observed here will still reflect or not since previous research (e.g. Li & Wharton, 2012) has noted differences in using metadiscourse by L1 Chinese writers at different institutions. Additionally, in future if time and other analysts are available it seems to be useful to enlarge the corpus and check the current findings.

Finally, I will make some personal reflection on how the whole research process benefits me on using interpersonal language in my thesis. It may sound quite surprising that I was actually not taught explicitly during the undergraduate and Masters study about the importance and way of expressing a range of stance showing varied degrees of commitment toward my own or others' view in academic writing. Regarding this point, I feel Cooley and Lewkowicz's (1997) statement described a similar situation: "it seemed to be assumed that students accepted for a research degree had the linguistic competence to produce a thesis without any specific instruction in writing" (p. 113). However, through this research my repertoire of interpersonal language and my understanding about using these resources have expanded. I realized that my previous understanding about the stance towards other research was limited as I seemed to equate evaluating other research to taking a Distance positioning towards it while neglecting the neutral stance (Acknowledge) and the stance of alignment (Endorse). This even made me think whether this could also be a reason why

many L1 Chinese writers were reported to have problem with taking a critical stance in academic writing, where being critical does not simply mean being disaligning from others. On a whole reflection, I feel my process of research reflects Johns' (1994) view that "effective language learning is itself a form of linguistic research" (p. 297). It is hoped that when the current corpus is made available in future more novice writers can learn using interpersonal language through similar exploration.

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Appendix I

List of Abbreviations

L1: first language

L2: second language

ESL: English as second language

EFL: English as foreign language

CMU: Central Michigan University

CAL: Centre for Applied Linguistics

CELTE: Centre for English Language Teacher Education

WRAP: Warwick Research Archive Portal

ELT: English language teaching

SFL: systemic functional linguistics

BEP: broadly English proficient

NEP: narrowly English proficient

EAP: English for academic purposes

IMRD: introduction method results discussion

CL: corpus linguistics

LT: language teaching

DDL: data-driven learning

L₁C: first language Chinese

L₁E: first language English

Appendix II

Gloss and color representation of Appraisal options investigated

- **positive attitude** (+): positive assessment of three kinds of feeling relating to emotion, ethics, and aesthetics
- **negative attitude** (-): negative assessment of three kinds of feeling relating to emotion, ethics, and aesthetics
- **Graduation** (↑): linguistic realizations that raise the author's evaluation, or the degree of the author's tolerance for possible alternative views in a communicative setting
- **Graduation** (↓): linguistic realizations that lower the degree of the author's evaluation, or the degree of the author's tolerance for possible alternative views in a communicative setting
- **Bare Assertion**: utterances that ignore any actual or potential divergent voices within a given communication
- **Deny**: linguistic realizations that invokes an opposite position for the purpose of completely refuting it
- **Counter**: linguistic realizations that invokes alternative views for the purpose of replacing them
- **Concur**: linguistic realizations that present a position as generally shared within a given speech community
- **Pronounce**: linguistic realizations that present a position as highly convincing and thus simultaneously refute any challenging position
- **Endorse**: linguistic realizations that present the author's overt alignment with an external voice that is often construed as highly credible
- **Entertain**: linguistic realizations that present a position as but one of a set of various possible positions
- **Acknowledge**: linguistic realizations that disassociates the authorial voice from the position being currently advanced but do not explicitly mark the authorial stance towards that position
- **Distance**: linguistic realizations that present the author's overt disalignment from an attributed position
- **Justify-from-data**: linguistic realizations that make overt reference to the author's specific research data such as interviews, questionnaires, and teaching journals in order to support an authorial proposition that is usually presented preceding to this reference

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Appendix IV

Text's label, Author's name and Word total of each text in the corpus

Text's Label	Author's Name	Word Total
X	Xue	4849
HG	Huang	6059
C	Carless	7875
L	Li	8127
WG	Wang	9376
R	Rixon	9505
HW	Howard	10232
M	Morgan	10775
G	Geary	12733
W	Wu	12779
J	Jiang	13041
HT	Hunter	13620

Reducing corpus size: procedure 1

Text being taken out	Remaining word total of the corpus (Original 118971)	Percentage reduced by	Number of appraisal features (Original 7059)	Percentage reduced by
X	114122	4.1%	6802	3.7%
and HG	108063	9.2%	6406	9.3%
and C	100188	15.8%	5871	16.8%
and L	92061	22.6%	5318	24.7%
and WG	82685	30.5%	4800	32.0%
and R	73180	38.5%	4246	39.8%
and HW	62948	47.1%	3534	49.9%
and M	52173	56.1%	2984	57.7%
and G	39440	66.8%	2363	66.5%
and W	26661	77.6%	1734	75.4%
and J	13620	88.6%	908	87.1%

Reducing corpus size: procedure 2

Text being taken out	Remaining word total of the corpus (Original 118971)	Percentage reduced by	Remaining number of appraisal features (Original 7059)	Percentage reduced by
X	114122	4.1%	6802	3.7%
and C	106247	10.7%	6267	11.2%
and HG	100188	15.8%	5871	16.8%
and R	90683	23.8%	5317	24.7%
and L	82556	30.6%	4764	32.5%
and HW	72324	39.2%	4052	42.6%
and WG	62948	47.1%	3534	49.9%
and M	52173	56.1%	2984	57.7%
and W	39394	66.9%	2355	66.6%
and G	26661	77.6%	1734	75.4%
and J	13620	88.6%	908	87.1%

Appendix V

Finding a textual voice

Exploring some options for the discussion section of a thesis or dissertation

Task 1: Stance towards literature

Look at these extracts. With regard to the literature cited, where do you think the writer has positioned him/herself on a continuum of alignment – neutral – disalignment?

1. As Benson (2001) alerts us, when learners were given the freedom to make all the choices in their learning, they might choose some objectives far away from the curriculum.
2. Different from Breen et al's (2001) study, which found shared principles but particular practices among 18 ESL teachers teaching both adults and children in Australia...
3. O'Leary (2006) and Wragg (1999) discuss the focus of assessment criteria on low inference or low order factors, concentrating on those things which can be directly observed...
4. ...or as Morris (1999a) points out, ED's conception focused more on creating a standard curriculum product that was to be provided to schools for implementation.
5. ...the sweeping assessment presented by Hu (2002, 2005) that cultural resistance has served as a key factor in hindering CLT promotion in the Chinese EFL setting.

Task 2: Stance towards own research

In these extracts, writers are talking about their own research. In each case, do you find their stance more tentative, or more assertive?

1. The result of the present study reveals that a teacher's teaching attitude serves as a model in class which sets an example for learners about their learning attitudes.
2. ...the investigation confirms that the sense of COMMUNICATIVE has always been a site of change and conflict.
3. It appears that, in effect, teachers and observers agree as to what they expect to see in a model lesson.
4. ...the findings of this research seemed to suggest that the 'context' element played a more important part in explaining learners' motivational 'ups and downs'.

Task 3: The voice of the results combined with distance from the literature

Look at the extracts. In each case the textual voice distances itself from the literature – but what is its stance towards the research results?

1. ...**a basic reason for the inefficiency of CLT in China has been summarized by Hu (2002) as being that** ideas advocated by CLT such as 'learning-by-doing' and equality between teacher and learner are in contradiction with Chinese teaching and learning culture, deeply influenced by Confucianism. But *the findings showed that* CLT is considered by certain participants as being fundamentally harmonious with the essence of Confucianism.
2. ...In addition, unlike **what was indicated in the literature review that** the constraints of CLT are mainly at cultural level, *the findings suggested that* the major constraints of CLT seem to be more at technical and ideological levels instead.
3. ...**strong will or persistence are often associated with Chinese culture by researchers such as Hu (2002), Jin and Cortazzi (1996).** The present study provides no evidence for such a claim. Instead, *the present study supports a contextualized understanding of concepts of*

learner autonomy that is suggested by researchers such as Aoki (2001) and Palfreyman (2003a).

Task 4: The voice of the results combined with alignment with the literature

Look at these extracts. In each case the textual voice aligns itself with the literature – but again, what is its stance towards the research results?

1. ...the majority of teachers had not taken any training course on evaluating materials. Therefore, teachers *might be* unaware that published checklists specifically designed to help them to select a textbook exist. **Kao and Huang (2005) also found that** more than half of the teachers the interviewed admitted that they do not have clear teaching goals in their minds and have not been trained in the textbook selection process.
2. ...*It seemed that* confidence in their [the writer's research participants] own capability to make informed choices along with positive learning experiences ensured that these students had an active engagement in English learning. They *seemed* no longer to need a teachers' guidance for the time being. **This confirmed Ruan's (2007) research that** students demonstrated greater self-directed learning and their strong sense of independence from the teacher came from their established self-efficacy, willingness, and confidence in learning.
3. ...*my teaching journals reveal that* reflection helped me to understand my strengths and weaknesses in teaching and this understanding prompted me to find ways to maintain my teaching motivation in class and be aware of the effects of my behaviours on learners. **Dörnyei (2003c:174) also suggests** reflecting to be an effective self-motivating strategy for teachers.

Task 5: Connections without explicit stance?

Look at these short fragments in which the writer refers to the literature. Do you get a sense of alignment or disalignment?

1. ...“history of ideas” approach common in existing literature...

2. ...Littlewood's (1999) suggestion of 'reactive autonomy', in which learners autonomously engage in the agenda set by teachers rather than taking full responsibility for their learning...
3. ...one of the parameters of the post-method pedagogy model – 'particularity', as proposed by Kumaravadivelu (2003) as well as one of the basic aims of CLT identified by Savignon (2006), that is, being adjustable to changes of context...
4. ...Baker's argument that some instances of a term are simply irrelevant to an investigation...

Now look at the fragments again, in their wider context. Do you get a sense of stance now? Why?

1. The CoE (Council of Europe), and the work, particularly David Wilkins' Notional Syllabuses, undertaken in the wake of the project's activity, appear to be by far the most influential in the early communicative discourse of the Journal. This finding is somewhat at odds with the **"history of ideas" approach common in existing literature.**
2. Findings of the present study suggest that in order to promote learner autonomy, it is crucial for teachers to show autonomy-supportive behaviours... However...teachers who hand over the learning responsibility to learners all at once may easily generate learners' negative affect for teachers... In this case, **Littlewood's (1999) suggestion of 'reactive autonomy', in which learners autonomously engage in the agenda set by teachers rather than taking full responsibility for their learning,** may be a good starting point for Taiwanese teachers.
3. The conveyed eclectic attitudes reflect the informants' sensitivity in the inseparable relationship between method and context. This happens to mirror **one of the parameters of the post-method pedagogy model – 'particularity', as proposed by Kumaravadivelu**

(2003) as well as one of the basic aims of CLT identified by Savignon (2006), that is, being adjustable to changes of context.

4. For two of the items, TASK and ACTIVITY, **Baker's argument that some instances of a term are simply irrelevant to an investigation** appeared more valid.

Appendix VI

Session Evaluation Form

Date:

Title of session: *Finding a textual voice: Exploring some options for the discussion section of a thesis or dissertation*

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements listed below in #1-7.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The topics covered were relevant to my needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. The content was organized and easy to follow.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. The materials distributed were satisfactory and effective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The tasks helped me to understand the materials.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The session enhanced my understanding of the options and strategies for discussing results of research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I expect to use the knowledge and skills gained from this session.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Overall, the session was helpful to my writing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. What part of the session was the **most useful** for your writing?

9. Other comments or feedback:

Appendix VII

Ethical Approval Form

Centre for Applied Linguistics

Application for Ethical Approval

MPhil/PhD Students

This is an additional application due to a decision to invite some MA students to participate in the research. Relevant changes are marked on the form in red.

A Information

Name of student: Yifan Geng

Date of registration: 3 October 2011

Project title: A Corpus-based Examination of Appraisal in Discussion Sections of Doctoral Theses

Supervisor: Dr. Sue Wharton

B Texts

If your research does not include any textual data, please confirm this below and go to Section C

If all or some of your texts are not in the public domain, please explain what steps you have taken to obtain relevant permission for their

collection and use. Please also complete any relevant parts of Sections C and D.

If some or all of your texts are in the public domain, give details of this and explain what steps you have taken to obtain any relevant permissions. When these permission have been obtained, please pass a copy to the Research Secretary to be added to your file. (You may not need to complete Sections C and D.)

I am selecting doctoral theses from the Warwick Research Archive Portal (WRAP, <http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/>). WRAP is "the home of the University's full text, open access research content and contains, journal articles, doctoral dissertations, book chapters, conference papers, working papers and more." Therefore, all of my texts are in the public domain. The University of Warwick has obtained permission from the authors of these texts to make them accessible to researchers.

C Participants

Details

Please describe the participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. as a result of learning disability.

In June 2014, some CAL MA students will be invited to participate in the research.

Respect for participants' rights and dignity

How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?

MA students will be invited to participate on a purely voluntary basis in a session which is designed to be of use to them as they write their dissertations. They will be assured that their participation and feedback will have no effect on their dissertation grades or their relationship with the department.

Privacy and Confidentiality

How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.

The texts that I am using are in the public domain; therefore, the issues of privacy and confidentiality do not rise.

No human participant will be identified in any research report.

D Consent

Will prior informed consent be obtained?

- from participants **YES**
- from others **YES**

At this stage of research, this issue is not applicable as writers depositing their theses in WRAP have already given relevant permission.

For the June 2014 sessions, participants will be invited via a consent email (attached). Approval to run the sessions has been obtained from the MA co-ordinators, Steve Mann and Annamaria Pinter.

Explain how this will be obtained. Provide details of the relevant procedures and any issues associated with them.

The consent email will be sent by my supervisor, who will deliver the session.

If verbal rather than written consent is to be obtained, give reasons for this.

Not Applicable

If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reasons for this. If the research involves observation where consent will not be obtained, specify situations to be observed and how cultural/religious sensitivities and individual privacy will be respected.

Not Applicable

Will participants be explicitly informed of the student's role/status? If not, give reasons for this.

Yes

Will deception be used? If so, provide a clear justification for this and details of the method of debriefing.

No

Will participants be informed of the use to which data will be put?

Yes

Will participants be told they have the option to withdraw from the study without penalty?

Yes

Attach a copy of all consent forms to be used in the study.

Attached

E Security and protection

Data storage

Where will data be stored and what measures will be taken to ensure security?

All data will be password protected and kept in my personal computer with a password to access.

For how long after the completion will the data be stored? (All data must be kept at least until the examination process is complete.)

All data will be stored until the completion of my PhD thesis/program and academic publications.

F Protection

Describe the nature and degree of any risk (psychological as well as physical) to participants and the steps that will be taken to deal with this.

At this stage of research, no risk is anticipated.

Identify any potential risks to the researcher and the procedures that will be in place for dealing with these.

At this stage of research, no risk is anticipated.

How will participants' well-being be considered in the study?

How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?

I will only use the data to study the general patterns of deploying appraisal options in doctoral theses and explore the repertoire of appraisal resources that the writers have. I will not use any individual text as an example of unqualified writing or to judge any author about his/her competence in English language or research.

How will you ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?

I will ensure that the reporting of my research will not involve any criticisms of any individual writer or writing. The reporting will only involve general features of the writing.

G Ethical dilemmas

How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research? Please give details of the protocol agreed with your supervisor for reporting and action.

If any ethical dilemma rises in the future stage of research, I will discuss about the solutions with my supervisor. If we are not able to solve it, my supervisor will request guidance from the Ethics officer of the Centre for Applied Linguistics.

H Authorship

Have you and your supervisor discussed and agreed the basis for determining authorship of published work other than your thesis? Give brief details of this.

My supervisor and I have agreed that we are co-authors (I as the first author and my supervisor as the second) of any publication based on my doctoral research project or any article that we jointly work on.

I Other issues

Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.

In the future stages of research, an online learning tool for thesis writing would be designed and would be used with human participants. If this plan develops, I will re-apply for ethical approval by submitting a new Ethics Form with relevant selections filled in.

J Signatures

Research student

Date

Supervisor

Date

K Action

Action taken

☐ **Approved**

☐ **Approved with modification or conditions – see Notes below**

☐ **Action deferred – see Notes below**

Name

Date

Signature

Notes of Action

Date of Approval by Graduate Progress Committee

Consent email: to be sent by supervisor, Sue Wharton, to whom “I” in the text refers:

Dear MA students

I’m writing to invite you to participate in a session on *Writing the discussion section of your dissertation*. As you may remember, Yifan Geng, one of our PhD students, has been doing research based on a corpus of discussion sections of doctoral theses in TESOL/ Applied Linguistics. Yifan has research findings which we both feel will be of interest to MA writers, and so we’re offering to share them in these sessions.

I will be the person delivering the sessions, and Yifan will be present as a researcher – observing, taking notes, audio-recording the session and distributing a short questionnaire for participants to complete at the end.

We’d like a maximum of 10 people in each session. At the moment we have booked three time slots, but can do more if there is a demand. If you would like to join, please do sign up for your preferred time using the doodlepoll below [link].

Please bear in mind that by signing up, you give your consent for the session to be recorded and used for research purposes. Please be assured that you will not be identified in any research report, and that whether or not you choose to participate, and any feedback you may give, will have no effect on your dissertation grade. You will be free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.